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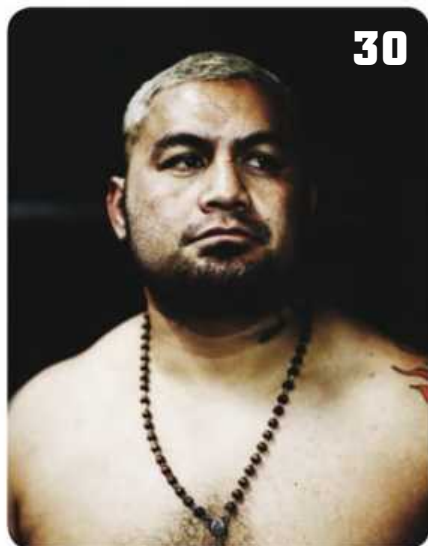
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Two mags in one! Flip the mag over to see  
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JORDAN LUCAS



to finish the fight in the first round and finally get the Australian BRACE title wrapped around my waist was a massive relief and a proud moment."

When he claimed the BRACE 2014 Bantamweight Championship, Lucas was offered a life-changing contract with ONE Championship. The undefeated fighter had worked hard to get the opportunity and when it finally came, it was everything that he had wished for.

"It was a lot of different emotions in one," Lucas said. "Since I started this sport I had big dreams right away to reach the pinnacle of MMA — to either the UFC or in ONE — the two big promotions in the world. ONE Championship offered me first and I took the opportunity to fight. It was a lot of hard work and that finally paid off. Now I know my worth."

Lucas hoped to make his ONE debut earlier this year, but he suffered a broken arm, which meant that his debut was delayed. Not only did it delay his career on the world stage, it also hampered his personal life.

"It was a tough time," Lucas said. "But out for this long, usually that's all you need. It goes up must be a good time to rest and

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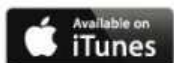






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LOH DOWN

# THE GOOD FIGHT

Ahh, the spoils of war. There is a very sweet-tasting smell in the air of Melbourne as UFC roll out their juggernaut and attempt to swallow our city.

For so many years the MMA fans and fighters of Victoria fought, begged and pleaded with their evil overlords to allow caged MMA, and specifically UFC, to be allowed on our humble and much-loved home soil.

And now here we are.

In truth, I can't believe it has taken this long. When the laws first went through, it was a bit of an 'under the cloak of darkness' move by the local government, and by the time most people found out what was even happening, it was already done. So, I figured it wouldn't be too long until it righted itself, especially after the amazing sell-out success of UFC 110 in Sydney back in 2010.

Now, as UFC 193 presents itself in all its Ronda Rousey glory, I can't believe it has really been that long. Almost as long as the life of this magazine.

Many people came to fight the good fight, so I'd like to extend my personal gratitude to all who threw their hat in the ring. It won't be soon forgotten by those of us in the industry – Justin Faux takes a closer look into how it all transpired in his article on page 64.

For the last few issues I have been telling readers about the exciting new project we've been working on for a while: the launch of Fight Live TV.

Well, I am proud to say that Fight Live TV is...LIVE!

Everyone I talk to, whether it be promoter, fighter or just your humble fight fan, is as excited to see this happen as I am. And it has been nothing but full-steam ahead on the project since last issue.

As I write this, we are in the middle of launching and things could not be going better for our new global platform.

Straight off the bat we have loads of content from Bellator, Glory, Lion Fight, RFA, Rebel FC, Legacy and all of our amazing local promoters like Powerplay, CMT, Epic, Hex, Ultimate Promotions, AFC, Fight Force and many, many more. And it's all sitting there for you to watch free!

But it's not just fights we'll be serving up. You'll be getting full backstage access, training videos from the pros themselves, highlight reels of all the best action, exclusive fighter and trainer interviews from around the world, all the latest news and events, huge photo galleries of all your favourite fighters, ring girls, special podcasts and loads of competitions and giveaways – and that's just a small taste of what's on offer!

Now, thanks to Fight Live TV, you will be able to watch all these events from around the world on any device – desktop, any mobile phone or tablet, as well as your smart TV.

But best of all, our Australian fighters and promoters will now have unprecedented exposure to major viewership in the US, Europe and Asia.

Anyway, I expect to see everyone at the big fight in Melbourne.

Keep fighting the good fight.

Jarrah Loh  
Editor



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# FIGHT!

AUSTRALIA

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# FIGHT!

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## BRAZILIANS GET THE BEST OF OZ GRAPPLERS

Four Australians competed at the recent 2015 Abu Dhabi Combat Club (ADCC) World Submission Fighting Championships in Sao Paulo, Brazil, but it was a disappointing tournament for the Aussies. All four missed out on the semi-final stages during the three-day no-gi grappling event, held in late August.

Cuban-Australian and suspended UFC fighter Hector Lombard fared best, defeating Jason Bukich in the opening round before losing by decision to Brazilian legend Alexandre Ribeiro in the quarter-final. Tobias Green also competed in the under-99-kg division, losing to Cassio Francis de Silva via leg lock.

Competing in the under-88-kg division, South Australian Craig Jones lost via submission from a Kimura to reigning champion Romulo Barral. Melbourne Lachlan Giles also lost in the first round when he faced three-time world BJJ champion and current UFC fighter Gilbert Burns. Giles was submitted by arm-bar in the under-77-kg division.

This was the 11th instalment of the championships and the second held in Sao Paulo.

## GEARING UP FOR THE 2016 ARNOLD CLASSIC AUSTRALIA

Preparations for the 2016 Arnold Classic Martial Arts Festival are already underway following the success of this year's inaugural Australian instalment.

The 2016 festival will be held over 18, 19 and 20 March, with plans to add even more martial arts styles to the growing championships.

The exciting art of kudo will join the returning martial arts championships of taekwondo, BJJ, AKF karate, kung fu, MMA, kickboxing, WASO/NAS and Kyokushin.

This year saw more than 800 competitors of all ages battle to be crowned the Arnold Classic Champion of their chosen discipline and next year's festival will hopefully see even more sign up to compete.

For more information, tickets and to sign up and compete, visit [www.acamultisport.com.au/](http://www.acamultisport.com.au/)



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Ben practising BJJ  
with his nephew

# RIP

## BEN QUARMBY

MMA fighter and MMA United Gym owner Ben Quarmby has passed away after a battle with a rare skin cancer.

Quarmby was diagnosed with Merkel cell carcinoma in December 2014, a month after his impressive TKO victory against Damien Fraser at Xtreme Fighting Championship (XFC) 22. Following that fight it was announced that he would compete for the XFC Welterweight title — a shot he never got due to health reasons.

Undeclared in his professional MMA career, Quarmby will be recognised by the XFC, who will introduce an award named after him. The Ben Quarmby Award will be given to a fighter who shows character, professionalism and performance.

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## HOSPITAL BANS THE HULK

Soa 'The Hulk' Palelei has been banned from visiting a West Australian hospital because he fights in a cage, despite raising more than \$60,000 for the organisation.

MMA is legal in Perth, where the Princess Margaret Hospital is located, but fights take place in a boxing ring rather than a cage. MMA fights in a cage are banned in the state.

Palelei told CNN he was deeply hurt after the hospital banned him from a photo-shoot.

As part of the fundraising, the UFC fighter will work out with retired Rugby League player Matt Fuller for 24 hours on an arm grinder for the Telethon Kids Institute.

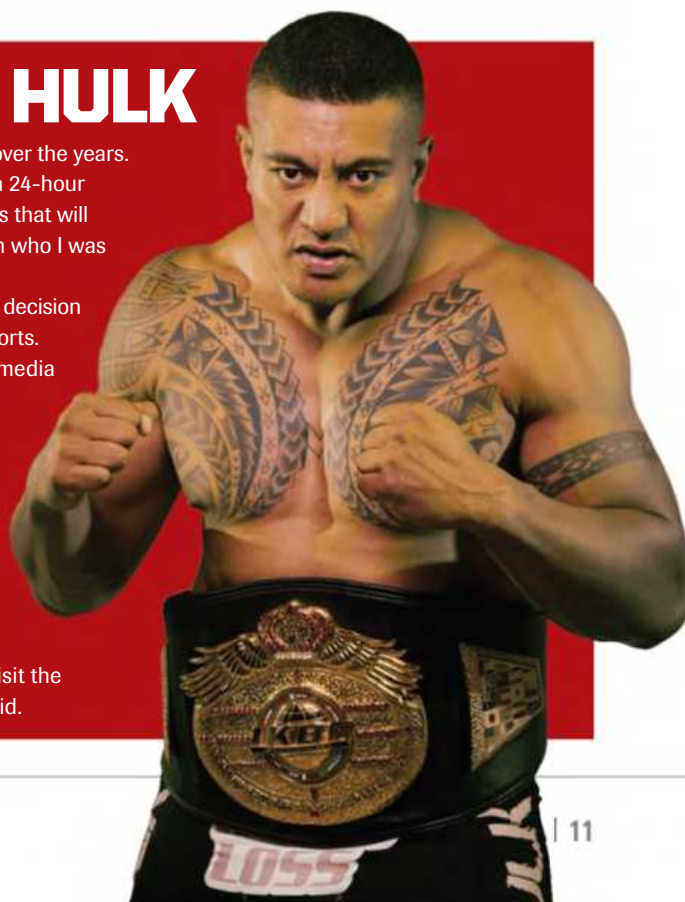
"I'm also a person with a life outside of UFC, with a son who suffers from absence epilepsy, and not to mention all the

charitable work I have done over the years.

"I am about to embark on a 24-hour challenge solely to raise funds that will directly benefit those children who I was not allowed to meet."

The hospital has backed its decision despite Palelei's charitable efforts.

"Following the significant media coverage of controversy surrounding UFC and 'cage' fighting, which is currently banned in Western Australia, a decision was made by the Princess Margaret Hospital executive that it would not be appropriate to have a representative of the sport visit the hospital," a spokesperson said.





**"PERSONALLY, FIVE YEARS, I THINK IT IS TOO MUCH. I THINK THEY WANTED TO USE HIM AS AN EXAMPLE BECAUSE THIS IS A COLOURFUL CHARACTER WHO TALKS A LOT AND MADE A LOT OF NOISE."**

— **Georges St-Pierre** on the Diaz suspension to FoxSports.com

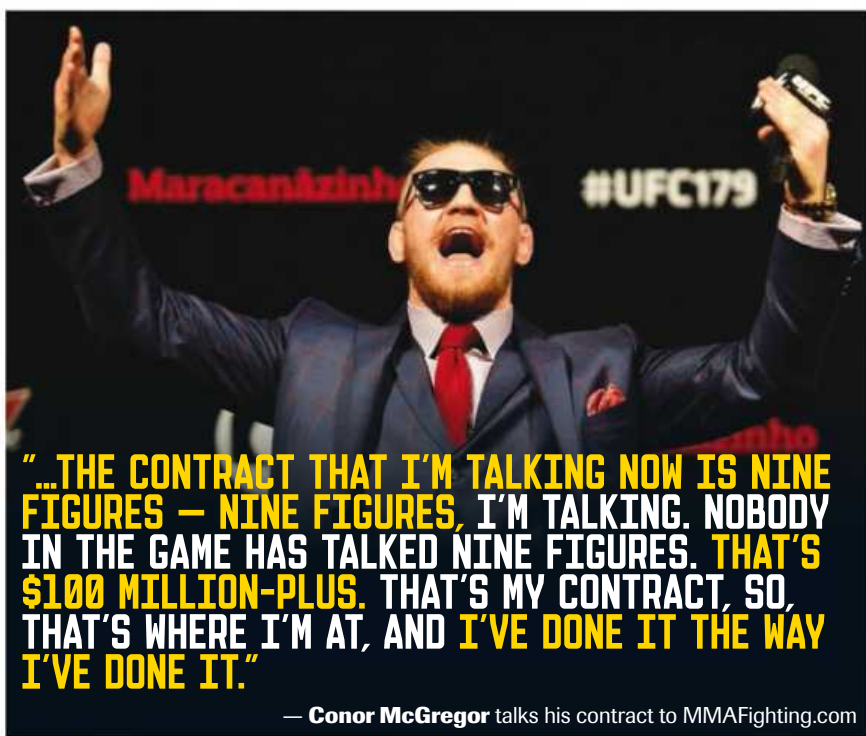
**"SHE'S MY WOMAN AND I'M HER MAN. THERE'S NO BOYFRIEND, GIRLFRIEND STUFF. THERE'S NO DATING. WE'RE TOGETHER."**

— **Travis Browne** about Ronda Rousey on The MMA Hour



**I DON'T TALK ABOUT MY PERSONAL LIFE MUCH, THAT'S WHY IT'S CALLED PERSONAL LIFE, IT'S TRUE THAT TRAVIS AND I ARE IN A RELATIONSHIP. I'VE REALLY ENJOYED THE TIME WE HAVE SPENT TOGETHER AND GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER. AND THAT'S ALL I'M GOING TO SAY ABOUT IT."**

— **Ronda Rousey** about Travis Browne to ESPN.



**"...THE CONTRACT THAT I'M TALKING NOW IS NINE FIGURES — NINE FIGURES, I'M TALKING. NOBODY IN THE GAME HAS TALKED NINE FIGURES. THAT'S \$100 MILLION-PLUS. THAT'S MY CONTRACT, SO, THAT'S WHERE I'M AT, AND I'VE DONE IT THE WAY I'VE DONE IT."**

— **Conor McGregor** talks his contract to MMAFighting.com



## COMING THIS SUMMER



### SuperKombat World GP Final

Wed Nov 11th **Replay – PPV**



### Caged Muay Thai 6

Fri Nov 20th

**Free Replay**



### Lion Fight 26

Sat Nov 21st

**Live – PPV**



### AFC 14

Thur Nov 26th

**Free Replay**



### Powerplay 27

Sat Nov 28th

**Free Replay**



### Powerplay 28

Fri Dec 4th

**Live – PPV**



### Glory 26

Sat Dec 5th

**Live – PPV**



### Caged Muay Thai 7

Sat Dec 5th

**Live – PPV**



### AFC 15

Sat Dec 12th

**Live – PPV**

## MORE TO COME

CHECK OUT FIGHT LIVE TV  
FOR TIMES AND EVENT DETAILS.





# 5 MINUTES WITH... MICHELLE WATERSON

BY SUBMISSION RADIO

## How do you see yourself stacking up against Tecia Torres at UFC 194?

Both of us have that stand-up background. But as far as the ground goes, I do have the upper hand. So I feel when they matched Tecia with Angela Hill, they thought it would be a great match-up because they both have a stand-up background, and Tecia took advantage of the fact that it was MMA and took it to the ground. I don't feel like Tecia's gonna do that. I feel I'll be able to dictate where I want the fight to go, whether it's standing or on the ground, and I think that's just something we're going to play with a little bit in the fight camp.

## Are you excited to possibly be the first person to beat Tecia in pro MMA?

Oh yeah, definitely! You know, Tecia is ranked number five for a reason. She's young and she's eager and she's hungry, and she comes from a great camp. But for me, I feel like I perform better when I'm under pressure and rise to the occasion when I'm faced with



an opponent with such a skill level. I think that it makes me elevate my skill level.

**Did you study Tecia's *The Ultimate Fighter* loss to Randa Markos?**

Yes, we study a lot of tape, and like I said, I feel like her strong suit is her stand-up. I know she's working on her ground and I know that she tried to display that in her last fight, but I do think that there are areas where I can capitalise on the ground, on her cage work, and even in her stand-up there are some habits that can be seen.

**Do you feel your karate background will help neutralise Tecia's striking?**

I definitely do. My base was karate and so I know that kind of style. I know the ins and outs, the switching of the stances. And when I first started fighting, I know what other people did to me to shut me down. And so that's what I'm going back to.

**How risky would it be for Tecia to try the same game plan as she did with Angela and try and hold you?**

If she takes me down, she's getting submitted.

**Do you think if you get a win over Tecia it catapults you into a short list of title contenders?**

Yeah, I hope so. You know, I wouldn't be fighting if I wasn't trying to get to the top. So I definitely hope so.

**How was the reaction at Jackson/Winkeljohn's regarding Jon Jones' good news with his 18-month probation?**

Well, I really haven't been in the gym much because I was in Costa Rica and because of my hand — my hand has been broke and still healing. So, I haven't been in the gym much, but yes, I did see Jon and he looks to be in good spirits, and I think that this is good news for him and for the whole team. It's good to have good news.

**Prediction on UFC 194?**

I predict I win via submission. 

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# NEW BLOOD

Mixed martial arts is the fastest growing sport in the world. It garners more attention and new fans daily. The emergence of so many new athletes sometimes makes it hard for fans to notice some of the fighters on the verge of making it to the next level. **FIGHT!** takes you deep inside the sport and presents you with some of the upcoming New Blood.

BY ZACH BROADHURST

## CHARLIE ALANIZ

**RECORD:** 9-1

**WEIGHT CLASS:** Flyweight

**KEY VICTORIES:** Senzo Ikeda

**AGE:** 30

**COUNTRY:** America 

**NICKNAME:** Charlie

For California native Charlie Alaniz, Australia has become a happy hunting ground. Moving Down Under in 2012, Alaniz has gone 8-0 on Aussie soil — including the inaugural HEX Fighting Series Flyweight title.

"I feel very thankful that I was able to win the title," says Alaniz. "It was an awesome experience for me. I was really happy that I had this opportunity to showcase what I can do. What I do means everything to me and this is what I've always worked hard for."

"I feel energised, invigorated and I love the mental battle that arises. In every fight, I enjoy it as much as I can, I live in the moment and it feels great."

Fighting half way round the world, Alaniz doesn't often get the chance to fight in front of his family, but with her son fighting for a title, Alaniz's mother had to make the trip over.

"I fight from the heart and I was very happy that my family and friends were able to truly share that one moment in time with me," says Alaniz.

"It was an intensified experience and one that we shared together. Most of my fights had not allowed me the same experience. My mum flew all the way from California to see my fight."

Alaniz competed on the first three of HEX Fighting Series' shows and was impressed with how the emerging promotion treats its fighters.

"In my opinion, Hex are all about a community with the fighters," says Alaniz. "They are all about offering experience, guidance,

connections and endorsing a show that people are proud to be a part of. They take no shortcuts and treat every fighter with respect. This great promotion is designed to give that fighter a night of feeling special. I'm very thankful for all the opportunities HEX has given me."

Originally from a wrestling background, Alaniz was a very talented junior athlete, his achievements earning him a full-ride scholarship to Montana State.

"I first began my sports career as a wrestler at the high school level at La Mirada High School in Los Angeles," says Alaniz. "I was placed sixth in 2003 in my senior year at the 130s as a national qualifier. I wrestled at the junior college level at Cerritos College. I became California State champion at 135 in 2006. And I also received recognition as a two-time All-American."

His wrestling background has been a strong advantage in Australia given a lot of Aussie fighters are more likely to have a background in kickboxing or Muay Thai. Alaniz looks to make his game as well rounded as possible; however, even recently travelling to Thailand to work on his stand-up abilities.

"Thailand is known for Muay Thai and as an MMA fighter, I want to learn from the best in all disciplines," says Alaniz. "What makes this sport so captivating is that there is beauty in so many aspects of it — the movements, the culture and traditions."

While Alaniz will look to close out 2015 with one more win, he has bigger goals on the horizon; including becoming one of the world's best, and inspiring others in the process.

"The next step is to win as many fights as I can and continue to follow my true passion," says Alaniz. "I will keep working hard with professionals on a daily basis and become a world champion someday."

"Being a sportsman and an MMA fighter has given me the chance to use my gifts to both teach and inspire others to never back down from a fight, no matter the circumstances."



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# ARNOLD WILL BE THERE – WILL YOU?

## JAMIE ABDALLAH

**RECORD:** 8-0

**KEY VICTORIES:** Randall Rayment

**WEIGHT CLASS:** Light Heavyweight

**AGE:** 24

**COUNTRY:** Australia 

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** [www.facebook.com/abdallahbros](http://www.facebook.com/abdallahbros)

**J**amie Abdallah and his brother Haysem are one family you'd be wise not to mess with. While Haysem is one of the country's most dangerous kickboxers — boasting a record of 20-0 — little brother Jamie has become a champion in his own right in MMA.

The competitive pair challenge each other in almost every training session, but their lack of desire to face each other in the ring or cage has seen them take different paths — a decision their parents are pleased with.

"Obviously, we'd never fight each other — our mum would kill us," laughs Jamie. "My brother went straight for the kickboxing road. I've always been a fan of WWE and wrestling, so before MMA became big I loved any kind of wrestling and I knew it was something I'd enjoy, so I started off grappling at XFC Australian Top Team. When MMA got a bit bigger and started getting noticed in Victoria, I went down that road."

The boys have developed under the watchful eye of Kelly Seif at XFC Australian Top Team, a partnership that has paid dividends.

"We train together every session and every fight camp regardless of who is the one fighting," says Jamie. "The one constant thing at XFC for the last six years is me, my brother and Kelly in every class. Kelly is pretty much the whole reason we got into it. Without him and without his mentoring there is no way we'd be where we are today."

"Originally dad sent us to XFC to start losing weight. We had no drive to fight, but Kelly saw something in us both and through his nurturing and guidance we have grown. That's why we will always stay loyal to him. He's mentored us. We love it and we are like the three amigos together."

Jamie's eight-win career already boasts three championship belts, but it's the most recent one — his AFC Light Heavyweight title — that is the most prestigious and important in his young career.

"AFC is probably considered the number-one show in Australia," says Jamie. "It's regarded by a lot of people and if you have the title, you are considered to be the best in that division. Having won different titles before, I knew what to expect, but the recognition was unreal and to do it in a cage as well, in front of a capacity crowd, all my guys there to support me, it was unbelievable."

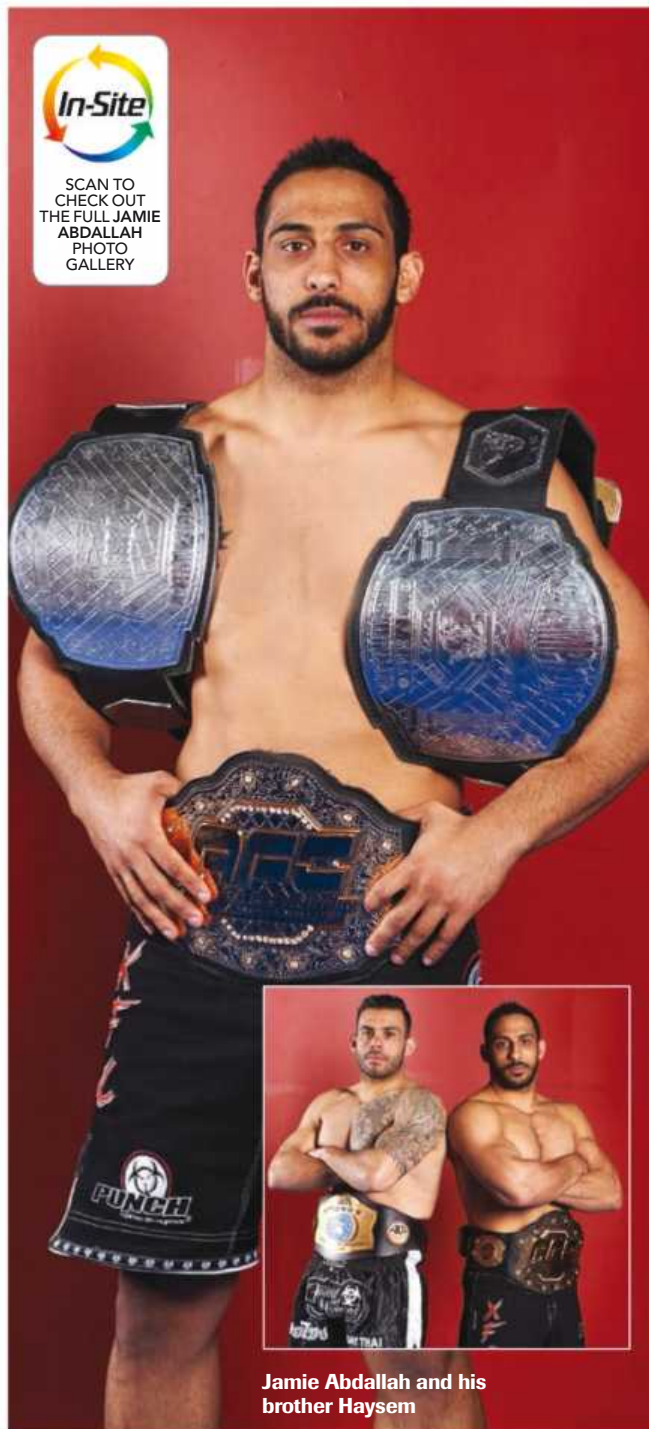
Securing the title in March of 2015, Jamie defended it against Randall Rayment six months later at AFC 14 in an exciting fight — Rayment was the first man to push Jamie past the first round in over three years.

"We got the job done via TKO in the third round," says Jamie. "I usually get it done in the first, but it was a good experience for me, being so young in the sport, to go past that first round — that's probably the first time in two years I've gone past the first 30 seconds."

"To do that and to come out on top, and to have faith in my game was a real eye-opener for me and made me realise even more that I can do this."

Fast running out of worthy challenges here in Australia, Jamie has his sights set on the UFC, but until they come knocking, he's happy to be an active champion.


"I believe I'm ready for the UFC," says Jamie. "I've put in the hard work, all my fights are exciting and I've got good crowd



CHARLIE SURIANO

support. When it happens, it happens, hopefully in the next year or so it will get done, but right now my game plan is just to keep fighting the best guys in Australia — there is no reason they wouldn't come calling."

If and when the UFC does come calling, Jamie will be determined not just to make up numbers, seeing himself capable of becoming one of the best light heavyweights in the world.

"I want to dominate the light heavyweight division of the UFC," says Jamie. "I'm not doing this just to make it to the UFC, I want to make a splash. At the end of the day, everyone has a chin and if I'm knocking guys in Australia, there is no reason why I can't knock out the top guys in America." 





# AUSTRALIAN TOP TEAM



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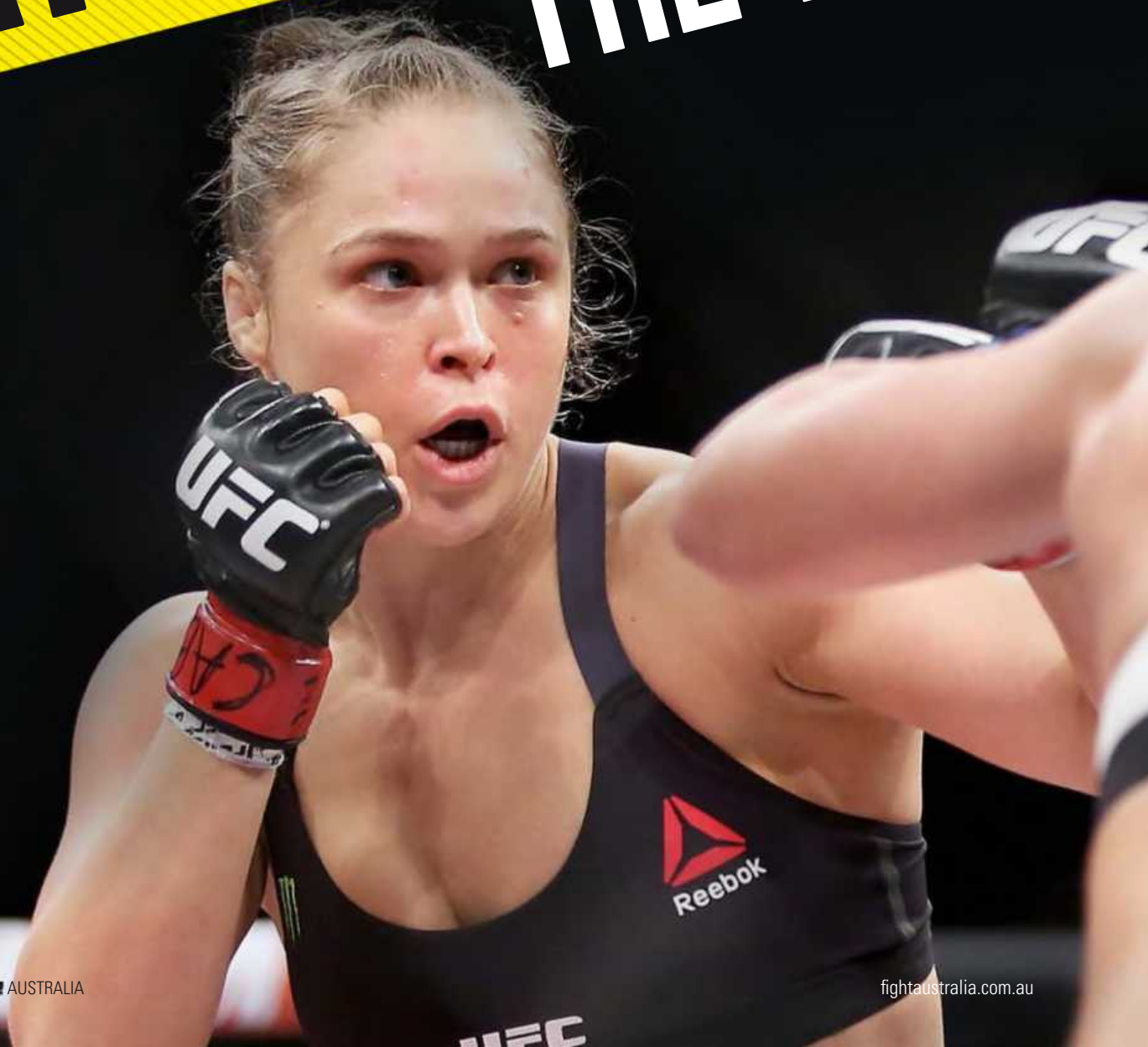
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# FROM ATHENS TO A THE RISE



# AUSTRALIA OF RONDA ROUSEY

UFC bantamweight queen Ronda Rousey is chasing a world record when she touches down in Melbourne for her championship bout against three-divisional boxing champion Holly Holm on 15 November.

BY JUSTIN FAUX //  
PHOTOS BY GETTY

**R**ousey, the world's most dangerous female athlete, landed in Australia this past September for a whirlwind tour of the country. In a 72-hour window, the UFC champion spoke with dozens of major media outlets between Melbourne and Sydney, including *The Footy Show*, *Sunrise*, and *A Current Affair*.

The main attraction for her visit Down Under was an appearance at Etihad Stadium, a venue that the UFC plans to fill with tens of thousands of adoring fans in November.

Children as young as seven were among the estimated 6,000 onlookers, who pre-booked a seat at the UFC 193 press conference just to see the UFC's golden-haired poster girl discuss her upcoming championship bout.

Joining Rousey among the all-female cast of headliners was Holm, her eventual opponent, as well as Joanna Jedrzejczyk and Valerie Letourneau, who will fight for championship gold in the UFC's strawweight division.

"This whole women's power movement that's going on right now is crazy," UFC president Dana White told the sea of reporters in Melbourne.

"We're sitting here in Melbourne, Australia with a main event and co-main event (featuring) women, with a possible 70,000 seat arena sellout. It's never been done in the history of combat sports."

Tickets went on sale for the UFC's Victorian debut days after the press event, and early indicators suggest that the venue will be at capacity for the pay-per-view.





Rousey sinks her hooks in at the Beijing Olympics

**"I'M AT THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE, HAVE FINISHED FIGHTING, HAVE NO RESPONSIBILITIES, WAKING UP AT 2PM AND NOT THE SLIGHTEST CLUE OF WHAT DAY OR WHAT DATE IT IS."**



A spot in the nosebleeds will cost fans \$104, while the best seats in the house are selling for \$468. The largest attended sporting event in the history of the Docklands-based stadium is 56,021 for a 2013 State of Origin clash between New South Wales and Queensland.

Given the additional floor space for a UFC event, the building's capacity is estimated to be increased by 15,000 to 70,000.

That would shatter the current attendance record for a UFC event, which stands at 55,724 for Georges St-Pierre's UFC title defence against Jake Shields in Toronto, Canada.

White, the UFC boss, was unwilling to outright predict a sellout in Melbourne's second-largest arena, but Rousey wasn't as hesitant. "We're going to beat that attendance record," Rousey said. "I really believe that the Aussies are the one people in the whole world that appreciate a fight well enough to be able to make history and break that record."

A smile broke out on the face of White, who was standing an arm's length away from Rousey. The bald-headed promoter has already dealt with crossover stars — Georges St-Pierre and Brock Lesnar were both major box-office attractions for the premier mixed martial arts promotion, but Rousey has proven to be in a league of her own.

White was once defiant that the fairer sex had no place in the rough-and-tumble world of the UFC. He constantly argued that the public didn't have an appetite for watching two women beat each other to a pulp, but Rousey was determined to twist his arm.

"I'm gonna make Dana White love me whether he wants to or not," the champion athlete told *Fight!* in 2011, two years before her UFC debut.

It's become a running joke that White has gone from a major detractor of women's prizefighting to promoting a double main event featuring four women and two championship belts, but after one look at Rousey interacting

with the crowd in Melbourne, it's not hard to see why he changed his tune.

The 28-year-old has talent, charisma, good looks and an ability to connect with an audience. The two-time Olympian's popularity seemingly knows no bounds, with photographers, videographers, reporters and even movie producers chasing the UFC's most bankable star on a daily basis.

Rousey has shed her clothes for *ESPN's* The Body issue, appeared in *Maxim's* Hot 100 list, and been featured in *Forbes* magazine's 30 Under 30. *Sports Illustrated* even named her the Most Dominant Athlete Alive.

If that weren't enough proof of her stardom, *ESPN* recently ran a fan poll to determine the best female athlete in history. To reach the finals, Rousey earned fan support to edge out Olympic swimming prodigy Missy Franklin, heptathlete legend Jackie Joyner-Kersey, WNBA and college basketball superstar Diana Taurasi and quite possibly the fastest woman in the



world, Olympic track athlete Florence Griffith Joyner.

Rousey defeated 21-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams in the voting finals, gaining 52 per cent of the 13,000 votes collected.

So now, almost three years after White agreed to unveil a women's division, the savvy promoter calls it "the best decision of his entire life".

Rousey was born in Riverside County, California with her umbilical cord wrapped around her neck. She turned blue and was deprived of oxygen long enough to cause damage to her brain.

The timid youngster had developmental delays for most of her childhood. She didn't speak a coherent sentence for the first six years of her life, and struggled in any social setting. It took years of speech therapy at the Minot State University in North Dakota to get Rousey back on track (today she is one of the smoothest — and fastest — talkers on the UFC roster).

Rousey credits her beloved father, Ron, as her biggest supporter during those tough years. "My dad always had my back. He'd always (tell me), 'you're not stupid, alright?'"

Ron was an avid outdoorsman. He took his daughters camping, teaching them to hunt and fish at his knee. Their trips into nature were abruptly cut short when Rousey was four after Ron broke his back in a horrific sledding accident, which was complicated by a rare blood disorder that prevented his injuries from healing.

Several years later, after constant battles with chronic acute back pain, Ron took his own life. This was the most formative event of Rousey's young life, and she seldom talks about it. "I feel like I'm prostituting his memory for my own career gain," a sobbing Rousey said during a UFC television special. "And it makes me feel like a f\*\*\*ing a\*\*hole."

The same year as her father's passing, Rousey found a scrapbook while rummaging through a box. Inside were photos and newspaper clippings of Rousey's mother, Dr AnnMaria De Mars, during her years as a champion judoka.

"My mother was the first American to win the world championships in judo back in 1984," Rousey said.

De Mars, a 6th Degree Black-belt in judo, encouraged all four of her daughters to try the Japanese martial art, but Ronda was the only one who stuck with it, dedicating over a decade of her life to training and competing.

"I was always an active kid, so I needed to do a sport," Rousey said. "My

**Rousey pounds out Liz Carmouche**



**Rousey grapples with Cat Zingano at UFC 184**



**Rousey takes it to Bethe Correia in Brazil**







mother's old teammates had opened clubs in the LA area, so when we moved (back to California) I tried it out and I loved it."

By her 16th birthday, Rousey was heralded as the finest female judo player in America. Chasing the Olympic dream, she packed her belongings and moved to Wakefield, Massachusetts where the lion's share of USA-based judokas were training.

"I had to place at the Pan American championships at 16 to even qualify the USA for a spot at 63kg," she

explained. "So I won the Pan Am Games and then the Olympic trials within a few months of each other. It was such a whirlwind experience, I felt like I had nothing to lose trying and not nearly enough time to worry about 'what if' I didn't make the team. I always expected (the 2008) Beijing Olympics to be my first Games, so jumping on the Athens team last minute was a pleasant surprise.

"Good thing I was always dumb enough to think I was capable of anything, even then."

Rousey became the youngest judoka in the world to qualify for the 2004 Olympics in Greece, but it all came at a price. The teenager was bulimic, and in a constant struggle to make weight for competition. To get down to 63 kilos she would wrap her entire body in plastic, put on layers and layers of workout gear and push herself to the absolute limits on a treadmill.

If she still hadn't shed enough weight, Rousey would repeat the same routine. The night before weigh-ins, she



making her the first American woman to ever medal in judo.

After receiving, as she put it, “10 grand and a handshake” for her historic podium finish at the Beijing Games, Rousey’s life felt directionless. “I dunno, maybe I’m just stressing about nothing,” she wrote, on her since-deleted blog. “I’m at the Olympic village, have finished fighting, have no responsibilities, waking up at 2pm and not the slightest clue of what day or what date it is.”

For a while, Rousey considered returning to the Olympic grind. By the 2012 Olympics in London, she would be a fit and ready 25-year-old in her prime years to become an Olympic champion, but decided against it. A painstaking regimen of training, dieting and weight cutting for four more years wasn’t worth a third crack at Olympic gold.

Rousey detailed in her blog that she was taking some time off “to party” after she flew home to California. She drank, smoked weed, was homeless and lived in her Honda for a while, and eventually settled into a dingy 12-by-12 studio apartment alongside her new boyfriend, a recovering heroin addict with more than a few bad habits.

Her \$10,000 payout from the Olympics dried up quickly, so she took gigs bartending, and held down a job on the graveyard shift at a 24 Hour Fitness.

Her mother was pushing Rousey to go to college, but Rousey had other career choices in mind. “After I decided to quit judo, I had two options I was willing to entertain: do MMA or become a rescue swimmer for the coast guard,” she said. “Since I could stop MMA at any time, I decided to try for that option first —

sleeved jacket. Judokas grab a hold of their opponent’s gi to land throws and trips, but this is not an option in the UFC or any other reputable promotion, where females typically compete in skin-tight shorts and a sports bra.

Rousey had to learn how to bully opponents to the floor without grabbing hold of a thick gi. Not to mention, she also had to learn how to strike. She soon linked up with Manny Gamburyan, a no-nonsense Armenian fighter who had been fighting for scraps since he was a teenager.

Gamburyan is a prominent member of the UFC’s featherweight division, and has even battled champion Jose Aldo for the World Extreme Cagefighting (WEC) title in the past. Gamburyan is a short and stocky fighter with a submission background, but has since developed crushing power punches that make him a major threat.

“The Anvil” Gamburyan began teaching Rousey the basics of boxing and Muay Thai, a striking art out of Thailand that involves an array of punches, kicks, knees and elbows. Given her judo credentials and lightning-quick submission abilities, Rousey didn’t need to become a great striker, but she needed to know the basics to survive in the shark-infested waters of women’s fighting.

Rousey began with a handful of amateur bouts in the California area between 2010 and 2011, submitting all three of her opponents in short order with an armbar — an extremely difficult submission hold that she perfected during her years as a judoka. Known as a *juji gatame* in judo circles, the armbar hyperextends an opponent’s elbow in

**“GOOD THING I WAS ALWAYS DUMB ENOUGH TO THINK I WAS CAPABLE OF ANYTHING.”**

couldn’t drink water, and on the day of weigh-ins she wouldn’t even shower in fear that wet hair would tip the scales in the wrong direction.

A baby-faced and inexperienced Rousey took home ninth place at the 2004 Olympics in Greece. A respectable placing, but not enough for the ultra-competitive grappler.

Rousey returned to the Olympics four years later at the 2008 Beijing Games. A 21-year-old Rousey lost a close semi-final match-up, then returned to win her next two matches to earn a bronze medal —

since when I committed to the coast guard, there would be no turning back.”

Rousey explained that competing as a prizefighter was “always a possibility in the back of my mind” but she never took it seriously until she started training in 2010. After hundreds of hours on the judo mats, Rousey had a great fundamental base to become a mixed martial artist, but there was a steep learning curve to become great at it.

In judo, competitors compete in a gi — a pyjama-looking outfit that consists of long shorts, a cotton belt and a wide-

seconds, stretching ligaments and, at it’s most brutal, even breaking bones.

By the time the quickly developing fighter decided to turn pro in early 2011, she was faced with a new challenge — nobody wanted to fight her. She was undefeated as an amateur, a highly credentialled Olympic medallist, and was being molded by a tight-knit family of Armenian fighters. Not exactly the ideal opponent for a beginner.

King of the Cage matchmaker Shawn Ramage found no willing takers in America when promoting her





Rousey flying high on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*

professional debut, opting to fly out Ediane Gomes, one of the world's best featherweight fighters from Brazil to take the challenge.

Gomes, a thickly muscled submission artist, is a reformed cocaine addict from the slums of Brazil who made a name for herself by brutally beating up a man in a no-rules, bare-knuckle fight for the short-lived and ultra controversial Rio Heroes promotion.

Gomes was (and still is) one of the most feared fighters on the market, but she was no match for Rousey, tapping to the submission magician's armbar in just 25 seconds.

After another first-round armbar victory on the local scene, Rousey was quickly recruited by Scott Coker, the then-owner of Strikeforce. The California-based promotion housed the majority of top female talent between their 135- and 145-pound women's divisions, and had a proven track record for turning unknown females into bona fide headliners.

Strikeforce was the first major promotion to highlight Gina Carano, a photogenic and marketable brunette who Coker envisioned as the poster girl for a women's fighting revolution. Three years after her first appearance for the company,

**"I'M GOING TO BEAT ALL THE GIRLS THAT ANYONE MENTIONS AS OPPOSITION TO ME AND I'M GOING TO DO IT IN THE MOST SPECTACULAR WAY POSSIBLE"**

Carano returned for a championship bout against Cristiane 'Cyborg' Justino, a brawny Brazilian slugger with a reputation for crushing opponents.

In her final mixed martial arts bout, Carano was bloodied and beaten by the Strikeforce standard-bearer. The fight ended with just seconds remaining in the first round after Justino rained down a series of thudding punches to a grounded Carano.

The fight was a complete mismatch, but a major success for the Showtime network, peaking with 856,000 viewers. It was an MMA ratings record for the subscription-based service, eclipsing the previous benchmark set during a 2008 freak show fight between Kevin 'Kimbo Slice' Ferguson and Dave 'Tank' Abbott.

By the time Rousey penned a deal with Strikeforce, things had changed, though. The company ran into financial difficulties and were purchased by Zuffa LLC, the parent company of the

UFC. Everyone knew that the top male fighters would eventually cross over to the biggest and best mixed martial arts promotion to set up champion vs. champion 'super fights', but the women were in a constant state of uncertainty.

Rousey got her first chance to shine as a superstar less than a year after her Strikeforce debut. The five-foot-seven wrecking machine had already scored two wins (both by armbar, totalling a combined 64 seconds) when she was booked to face Miesha Tate, the queen of the bantamweight castle, for the 135-pound championship.

The two world-ranked fighters grew anticipation for their fight by trading verbal blows in the weeks and months prior to the fight. Tate argued that Rousey was receiving a title shot based on her looks rather than her merit as a fighter.

Rousey rebutted that her credibility as a lifelong athlete was enough

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preparation to deal with a fighter like Tate, telling MMA Junkie she is “just some chick who decided in high school it’d be cool to wrestle, and a few years later decided it’d be cool to do MMA”.

Tate proved to be the toughest test of Rousey’s career. The tough-as-nails wrestler evaded her signature armbar on several occasions, and even landed a takedown on the judo queen, but the persistence of Rousey eventually paid off, submitting ‘Takedown’ Tate with just seconds left in the opening frame.

The bigger win for Rousey came days later when it was revealed that the main event grudge match drew 520,000 viewers, which was about 130,000 up from the average televised event from the company.

White, the UFC figurehead, could no longer deny the public’s fascination with the ‘Rowdy’ champion. He called Rousey a few months later with an offer: he was going to form the leagues first women’s division and build it around her.

Rousey made her debut in the premier mixed martial arts promotion the following year in the main event of the UFC 157 pay-per-view event. Facing former Strikeforce champion Liz Carmouche, Rousey needed less than a round to lock up her patented armbar and force her American opponent to cry uncle.

The event was an unabashed success, netting an estimated 450,000 buys on pay-per-view. To put that into perspective, the previous record for most bought event featuring two female fighters was between Laila Ali and Jackie Frazier-Lyde (the daughters of heavyweight boxing giants Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier), which only did 105,000.

In the near-three years since Rousey’s UFC premiere, the champion fighter has continued to shatter records, both in the cage and at the box office, making her the biggest crossover star that the company has ever seen.

Rousey aims to notch her seventh straight championship defence on 15 November in Melbourne against Holly Holm, a New Mexico-based fighter with deep roots as a professional boxer.

The 33-year-old striker, who was twice name Female Boxer of the Year by *The Ring Magazine*, has turned her attention to mixed martial arts over the past few years, compiling a perfect 9-0 record.

Holm made her UFC debut at the start of 2015, and has compiled two straight decision wins to earn a big-money showdown with Rousey.

The oddsmakers are giving Holm practically no chance of becoming



**IN THE NEAR-THREE YEARS SINCE ROUSEY'S UFC PREMIERE, THE CHAMPION FIGHTER HAS CONTINUED TO SHATTER RECORDS, BOTH IN THE CAGE AND AT THE BOX OFFICE, MAKING HER THE BIGGEST CROSSOVER STAR THAT THE COMPANY HAS EVER SEEN.**

the new UFC champion, paying \$1.07 (meaning punters would have to risk over \$1400 just to earn back a hundred big ones). Rousey, on the other hand, isn't as dismissive of Holm's chances.

"I'm very impressed with Holly Holm," she said in Melbourne. "She's a world champion boxer and I'd like to test myself with that level of striking. She's undefeated, she's the most decorated striker we have in the world.

"I'm going to beat all the girls that anyone mentions as opposition to me and I'm going to do it in the most spectacular way possible and I'm going to retire undefeated. In every fight, people say this girl is going to be the one, I'm just going to keep disappointing them." 🗡️

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# THE HUNT FOR BIGFOOT

## MARK HUNT VS. BIGFOOT SILVA II

The first time they met, many people called it the greatest heavyweight fight in UFC history, but a failed drug test by Antonio 'Bigfoot' Silva cast somewhat of a shadow over the result. Now Bigfoot is coming back to Australia and Mark is going hunting.

BY SUBMISSION RADIO // PHOTOS BY GETTY

### Were you chasing the fight with Bigfoot Silva to avenge the draw?

Well, no, I haven't been chasing [the rematch]. I get told the fights that I'm gonna fight and that's it. So I mean, it's a rematch. I've never lost a rematch and it's one of those...it's gonna be an exciting fight, so I'm looking forward to it.

### Were you disappointed originally when you found out that Bigfoot tested positive for PEDs after that fight?

Well I was disappointed, but you know, I think everyone's gonna try and get ahead somehow. I for one ain't cheating or anything like that, but it is what it is. It's the past and you just move on.

### Do you think the failed drug test was a case of Bigfoot trying to 'get ahead', or was it was a case of a misunderstanding with his doctor who administered his TRT?

Well I don't think that's an accident. I think, you know, trying to get the

advantage is always the case in this sport. Look at some of the top biking...that bike-riding guy [Lance Armstrong]. He lied for years about taking steroids. But everyone's different. The way I see it, everyone is trying to get ahead somehow, so yeah it's just the way it is. But yeah, like I said, move on. The past is [the] past.

### Is any part of you concerned that Bigfoot may not be clean in your rematch?

Well it's not my worry or concern on what they can do. I can't control what they can do. You know, I can only control what I do. So what happens when they get caught for cheating or whatever it is, then it mars their career and their life, their fighting existence, whatever they have done — like I said before in some other interviews, whatever they have done has been questioned.

So if you've been taking steroids and cheating, you know, whether you've been a world champion or not, or who knows

if you were cheating while you became the world champion? So it just questions everything you've done, actually. So why would you want to risk that?



**Now that you've seen what Bigfoot looks like off TRT, how much of a factor do you think it was in your first fight?**

Well, I don't know, you know, I mean...I'm pretty...it takes a lot to break me, but I broke my hand on his head. So I don't know. I mean, I don't know what kind of advantages it gives you. I have no idea. I'm not a doctor.

**How do you see the rematch playing out compared to the first fight?**

It's a three-round fight I think, this one, and I don't think it's going to go three rounds at all. And I already started my pre-training way before, to help with Soa's camp, and I'm just back home now. So I'm gonna be getting into my training and starting my camp in the next couple of weeks, three weeks. So I'll be in tip-top shape, and I won't make the mistake I did last time. I was up having to cut weight. So I'll be fine — it will end pretty quickly, I say.



**Is fighting Bigfoot a chance to get some revenge for your friend and teammate, Soa?**

Yeah, well it's a bit of redemption. It's time to [get a] bit of revenge actually. But it will be good, though. I was disappointed that Soa lost that fight, and he had that one....he had the first round, you know. I was just disappointed. Anyway, but it will be good to get some revenge.

**You posted a photo and it looks like you're in the best shape we've seen you in in a while. Can we expect to see the lightest Hunt ever at the UFC 193 weigh-ins?**

Well yeah, it was photoshopped [laughs]. Nah, I'm just kidding. We're just concentrating on weights and building a strong base. I'm about 131 kilograms (288 pounds) at the moment, but I feel pretty good. I had a few injuries with infections over there because of the dirty water and stuff like that. So I'm in good shape for camp, so it's gonna be good. I'll probably come in hopefully at about 115 kilograms (254 pounds) without a weight cut. So it's going to be great.

**BEING A FIGHTER, YOU GOTTA FIND SOME DIFFERENT WAYS OF ENERGY SOURCES, BUT A FEW PEOPLE HAVE REACHED OUT TO ME. A 300-POUND VEGAN NFL PLAYER FROM THE STATES REACHED OUT TO ME, SHOWING ME ALL THE DIFFERENT WAYS.**

**You posted on Facebook about becoming vegan. Do you actually plan to do it?**

Well vegan's a hard one. You know, I just posted up what I wanna do. I mean vegetarian is probably more to ease my way into being a vegan. Being a fighter, you gotta find some different ways of energy sources, but a few people have reached out to me. A 300-pound vegan NFL player from the States reached out to me, showing me all the different ways.







Actually, a lot of vegetarians and vegans have reached out to show me different ways you can eat and different things. So I appreciate all the help with that. But I don't think I'll go full vegan till after my career is done. So vegetarian, I'd say. I'll try taking in the good food probably. But it's hard to try and go [completely vegan], but I mean it's not hard after watching those kind of videos. It's just really sad.

**So will you try to become vegetarian?**

I'll be trying to. It's not an easy thing to do. But like I said, I gotta still fight. You know, fighting's like a... I mean being a meat-eater, you gotta be like a carnivore. I mean, it's gotta have something to do with fighting. I said when I finish my career as a fighter, then I'll go for vegan

straight away without eating any animal products. So it's a process.

**What are your thoughts on past opponent Fedor coming back to MMA after retiring?**

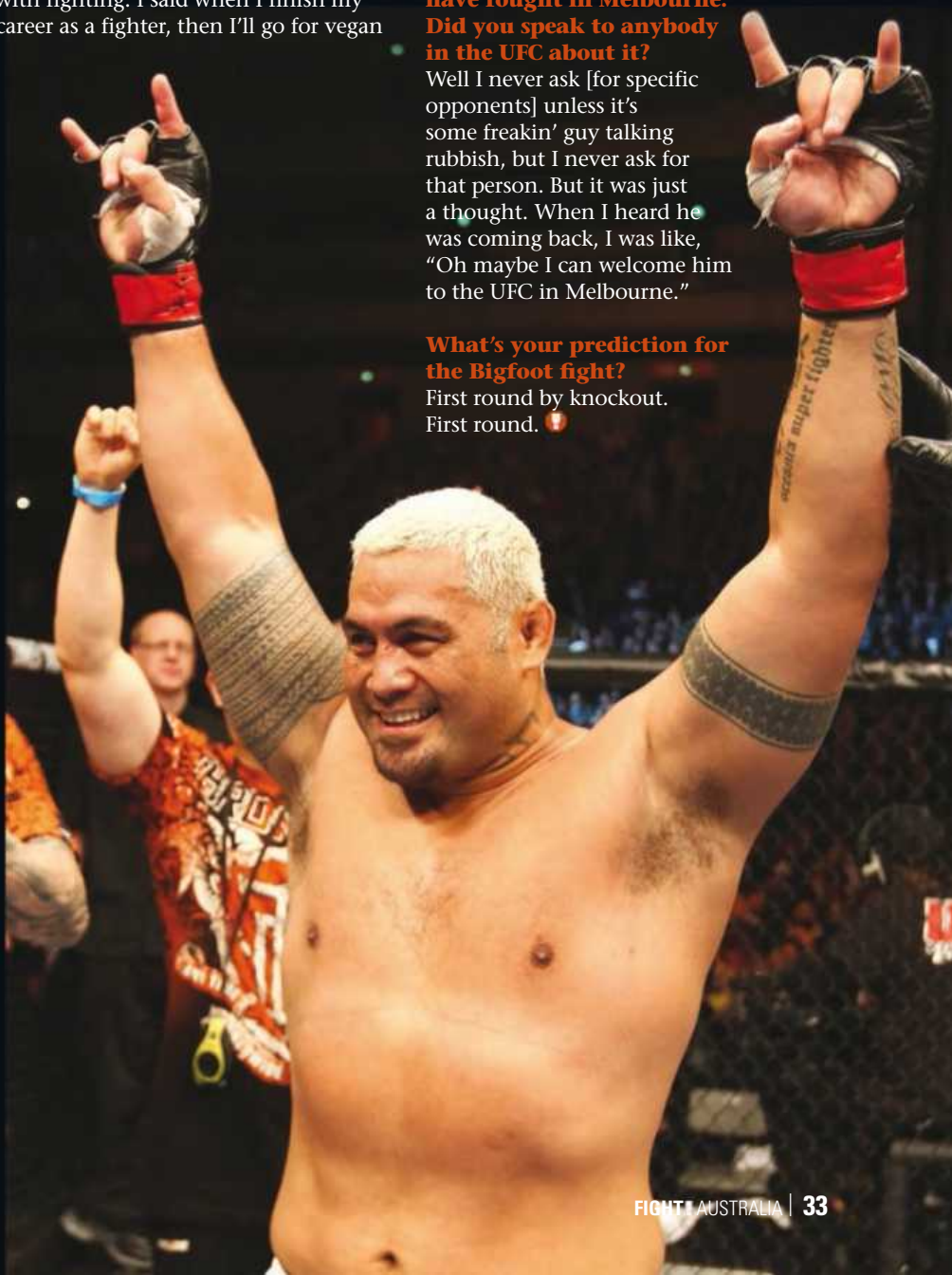
That's great, man. I mean, it's a long time. I don't know why he retired. Everyone has their reasons, but that's a long time coming. He's one of the greatest fighters of all time. I was hopefully looking forward to welcoming him back as a rematch. I was hoping it'd be with me in Melbourne somewhere, but I guess not. We'll see what happens. It's good that Fedor's back in the fighting circles.

**There was speculation Fedor would sign with the UFC and could have fought in Melbourne. Did you speak to anybody in the UFC about it?**

Well I never ask [for specific opponents] unless it's some freakin' guy talking rubbish, but I never ask for that person. But it was just a thought. When I heard he was coming back, I was like, "Oh maybe I can welcome him to the UFC in Melbourne."

**What's your prediction for the Bigfoot fight?**

First round by knockout.  
First round. 🇺🇸







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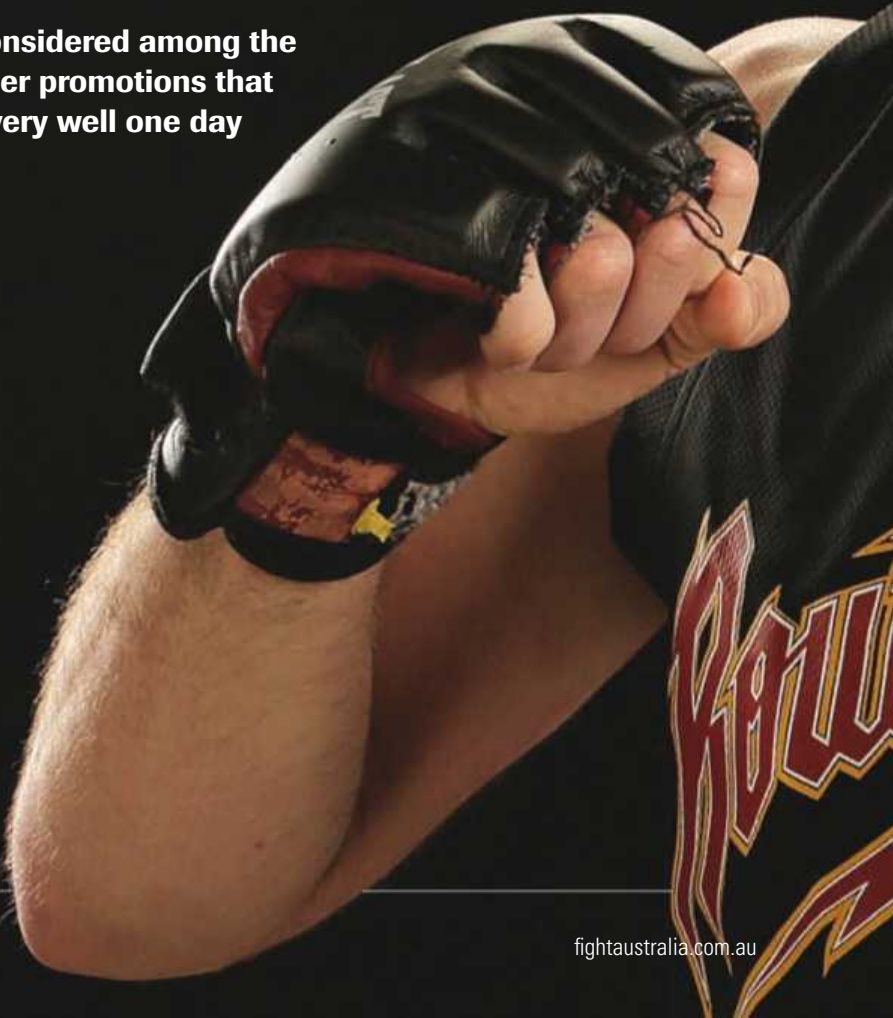
# TOP 5 champions outside the UFC

**While the champions of the UFC are considered among the best fighters in the world, there are other promotions that have dominant champions who could very well one day (hopefully) grace the famed Octagon.**

BY NEIL ROOKE // PHOTOS SUPPLIED

**T**he path to the UFC isn't quite as clear cut as it once was many years ago. It's not all about winning belts and winning fights, it has also started to become about politics and marketability. The sad fact is that due to many different circumstances, there are some fighters around the world who are considered quite good at what they do who may never get to fight for the UFC. That's not to say that they won't be remembered by some fans for what they have been able to achieve, they may just never get that opportunity to take the next big step of their career.

As far as champions go, there are a select few who are just so much better compared to their current competition. They are the champions who should, one day, get their opportunity at the big time. Here are the top five fighters to currently hold titles outside of the UFC.



## BEN ASKREN

**ONE Championship  
welterweight champion  
title defences: 1**



The story surrounding the career of Askren is an interesting one to say the least. After making it to the 2008 Olympics and losing in the quarter-final round, Askren made the switch to mixed martial arts. It didn't take long for him to get the hang of his new sport, with the esteemed wrestler winning his first four fights in the very first round. His dominance on the regional circuit led him to Bellator, where he won the season two welterweight tournament and subsequently after that won the Bellator welterweight title.

Askren went on to defend the belt four times before relinquishing the title when his contract with Bellator expired and they opted not to renew it. From there, things started to get really interesting for the undefeated welterweight. When negotiations with the UFC didn't exactly play out terribly well, it left one of the best welterweight fighters in the world without a home.

A month passed and it was announced that Askren would be joining the ranks of Asian MMA powerhouse ONE Championship. It didn't take long for Askren to continue his dominant ways. After an early scare in his first ONE Championship bout, which saw him on the receiving end of a takedown, Askren went on to win his first bout with the promotion in highlight-reel fashion. His next fight was for the welterweight championship, which he won with ease in the very first round.

Askren often cops criticism for his wrestling-centric style of fighting. Realistically, whenever he steps into the cage he just plays to his strength. His wrestling credentials are among the best in mixed martial arts and his last four wins have all been by way of stoppage.

Askren faced the biggest test of his career when he stepped into the cage with 72-fight veteran Luis Santos

and with their bout being ruled a no-contest,

Askren now faces that same test again in mid-November. Although Askren's ONE Championship contract is set to expire at the end of the year, unless something drastic changes, it's unlikely that he will be joining the ranks at the UFC any time soon and he will continue to be known as one of the best welterweight fighters not to grace the Octagon.

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## Demarte Pena

### EFC bantamweight champion

#### title defences: 2

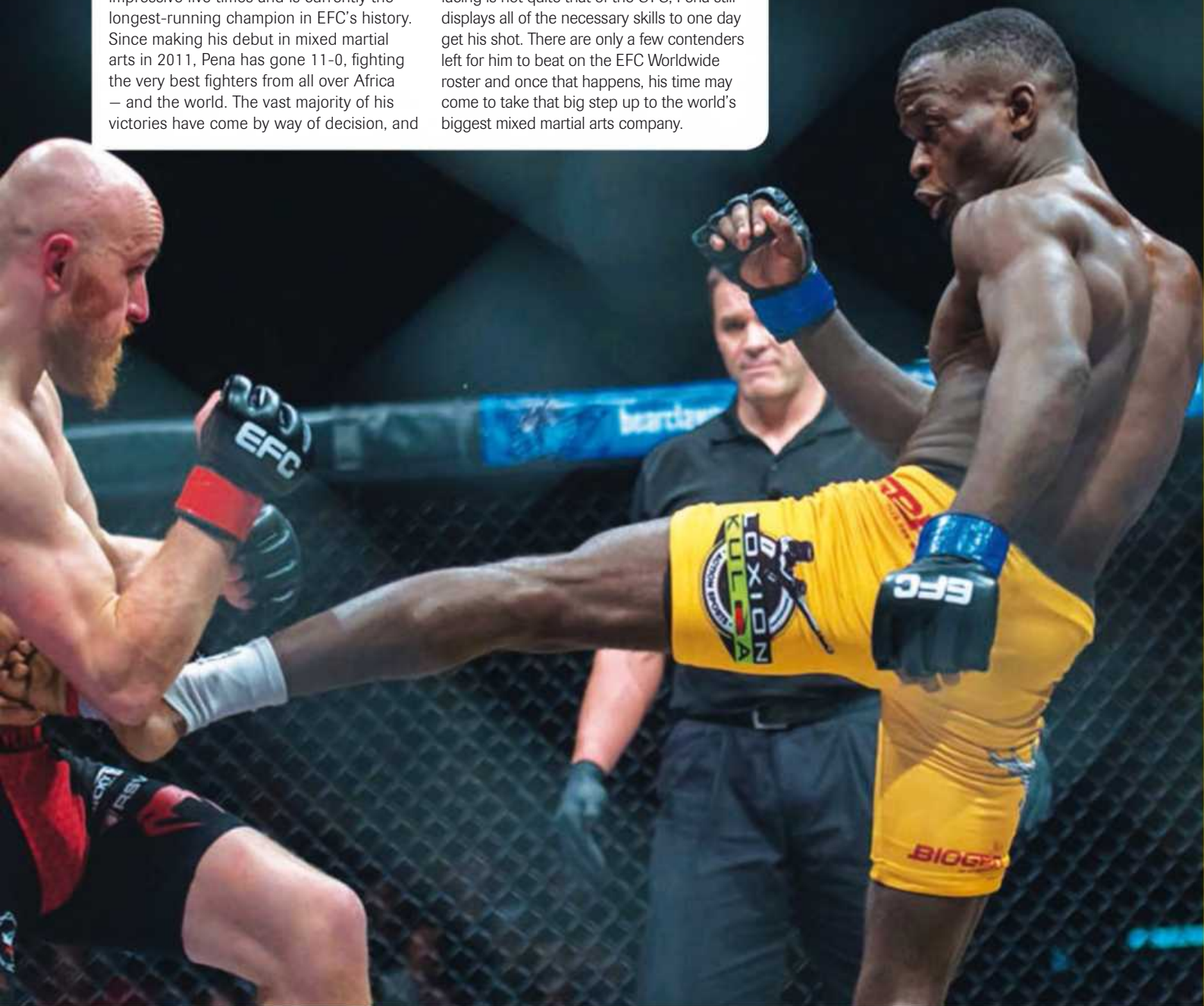
Pena has dominated two divisions during his career with EFC. He was previously the promotion's featherweight champion; however, he relinquished the belt when one of his team-mates was making a run as a contender. When Pena held the featherweight title he defended it an impressive five times and is currently the longest-running champion in EFC's history. Since making his debut in mixed martial arts in 2011, Pena has gone 11-0, fighting the very best fighters from all over Africa — and the world. The vast majority of his victories have come by way of decision, and

with that comes the criticism that he is a boring fighter.

His wrestling is the best in the division — there is absolutely no doubt about that. His game plan is solid. Each fight he goes into he knows his path to victory. While some of his fights may not turn out to be the most exciting affairs, he knows how to win, and at the end of the day that's all that truly matters to him in a sport where a fighter is measured on their win-loss record.

While the competition level that he is facing is not quite that of the UFC, Pena still displays all of the necessary skills to one day get his shot. There are only a few contenders left for him to beat on the EFC Worldwide roster and once that happens, his time may come to take that big step up to the world's biggest mixed martial arts company.

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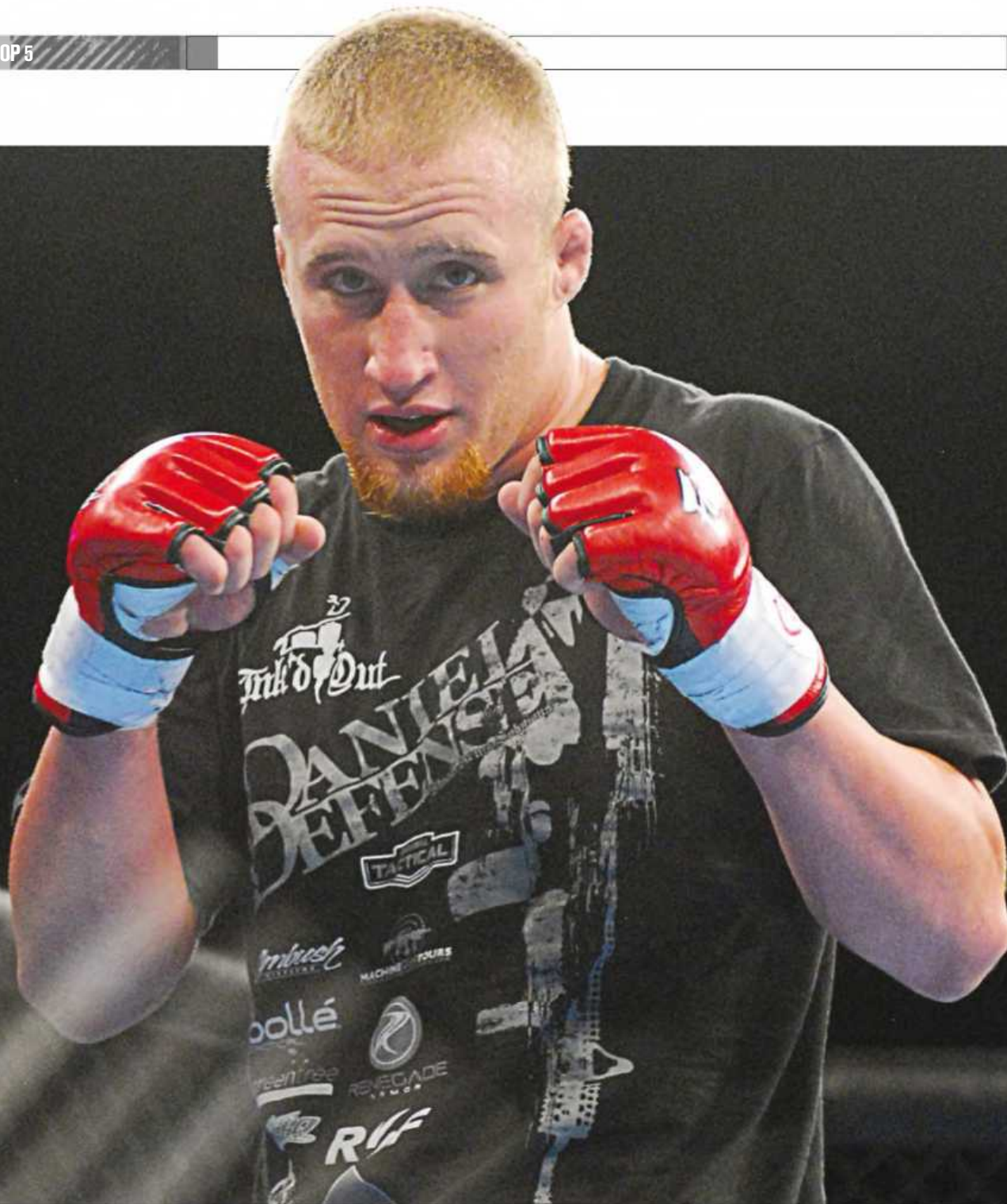
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## JUSTIN GAETHJE

**WSOF lightweight  
champion**

**title defences: 3**



Fifteen fights for 15 wins, with 13 of those coming by way of stoppage. If there was ever a fan-friendly kind of fighter outside of the UFC, it would be Gaethje. His style of fighting

is essentially described as 'balls to the wall' and every time he competes, he is no doubt shaving years off his life with his relentless aggression and willingness to take a punch and throw them.

Gaethje was signed to WSOF in 2013 for the promotion's second ever event and he won the lightweight title when he blasted Richard Patishnock at WSOF 8. Following that bout, Gaethje would receive the most publicity that

he ever has when he defeated up-and-coming contender Nick Newell in the second round of their bout. Gaethje went on to defeat UFC-ousted journeyman Melvin Guillard and then backed that victory up with a pair of entertaining victories over Luis Palomino.

While a lot of his opponents' names may not resonate with some mixed martial arts fans, his tenacity and his willingness to put on one hell of a show certainly does.

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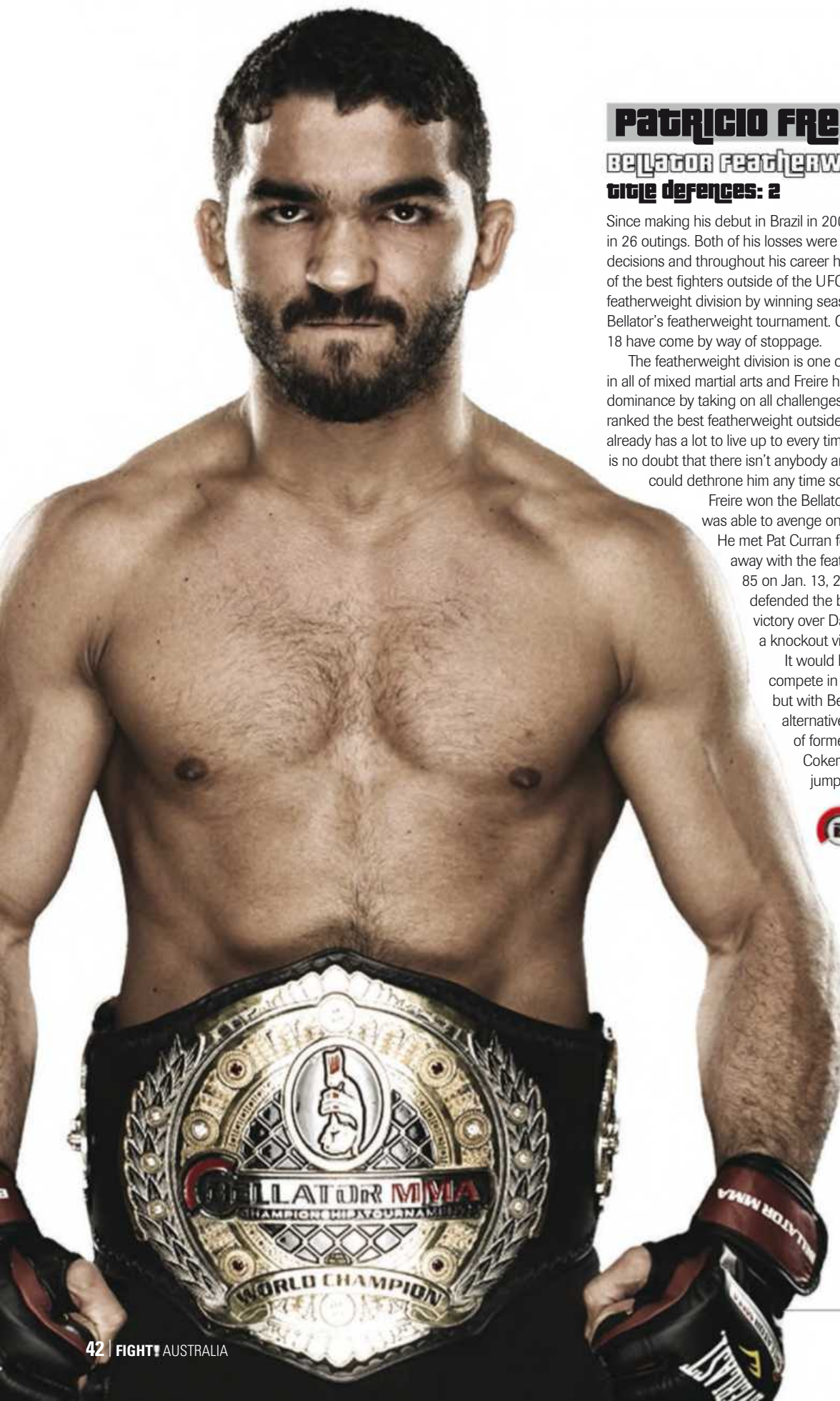


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## PATRICIO FREIRE

**BELLATOR FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPION**  
**TITLE DEFENCES: 2**

Since making his debut in Brazil in 2004, Freire has only lost twice in 26 outings. Both of his losses were by way of very close split decisions and throughout his career he has competed against some of the best fighters outside of the UFC. Freire made waves in the featherweight division by winning season four and season eight of Bellator's featherweight tournament. Of his 24 professional victories, 18 have come by way of stoppage.

The featherweight division is one of the most stacked divisions in all of mixed martial arts and Freire has continued to show his dominance by taking on all challenges inside the Bellator cage. Being ranked the best featherweight outside of the UFC means that Freire already has a lot to live up to every time he fights, and there really is no doubt that there isn't anybody among the Bellator ranks that could dethrone him any time soon.

Freire won the Bellator featherweight title when he was able to avenge one of his only two career losses. He met Pat Curran for the second time and walked away with the featherweight title at Bellator 85 on Jan. 13, 2013. Since that fight he has defended the belt twice, with a submission victory over Daniel Straus and most recently a knockout victory of Daniel Weichel.

It would be a shame to not see Freire compete in the UFC's Octagon some day, but with Bellator quickly becoming a true alternative to the UFC, under the lead of former Strikeforce founder Scott Coker, we aren't likely to see Freire jump ship any time soon.



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## CRISTIANE 'CYBORG' JUSTINO

**INVICTA FC  
FEATHERWEIGHT  
CHAMPION**



### TITLE DEFENCES: 2

When she fought Marloes Coenen for the second time and became the inaugural Invicta FC featherweight champion, it became clear that nobody in the division was ever going to be able to keep up with Justino. It was the longest fight that she had ever had in her career, and to this day it still is – and probably always will be. Prior to fighting with Invicta FC, Justino was the undefeated Strikeforce women's featherweight champion. She defended her belt three times, with two wins and a

no contest. There is no doubt that as far as women fighting in mixed martial arts go, Justino is one of the very best to step inside the cage.

For years now it seems as though the mixed martial arts world has been considering a bout between Justino and just one fighter. And it's one that on-and-off Justino has been talking about, claiming that it is the one fight that everybody wants to see. For whatever reason – well, largely due to them being in different weight classes – she has not been able to step inside the cage with the woman who was recently crowned the "world's most dominant athlete". Justino has claimed that she wants to fight Ronda Rousey, and Rousey has also claimed that she wants to fight Justino. That fight may happen one day, but for the time being

Justino has carved out quite the career in the featherweight division, and since winning the Invicta FC featherweight title, she has notched up a total of 91 seconds of fight time in her title defences against Charmaine Tweet and Faith Van Duin respectively.

'Cyborg' is in a league of her own when it comes to the featherweight division – much like Rousey is in the bantamweight division. She has not officially been beaten in mixed martial arts since her debut, which took place over 10 years ago. Whether she fights Rousey or not, Justino will always be remembered as a force among the featherweight division and while her dominance may not get the worldwide recognition that Rousey's does, she is still by and large considered one of the best fighters in the world.



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# THE BIG STAGE

BY NEIL ROOKE

## BEN ALLOWAY

Despite earning a coveted spot in the UFC's Octagon, Ben Alloway felt he didn't really belong. Now, after some soul-searching and four fights outside of the world's leading MMA organisation, Alloway hasn't given up hope of returning to the big stage.





BRETT ZIMMER

**"I ALWAYS  
THOUGHT THAT  
I WAS A BIT TOO  
INEXPERIENCED,  
I DIDN'T REALLY  
THINK I WAS  
GOOD ENOUGH  
TO BE THERE. I  
WAS STILL A BIT  
OF A FAN WHILE I  
WAS FIGHTING."**

Nearly 12 months had passed between the time that Benny Alloway stepped off the plane coming home from a hard-fought loss in London, England to when he entered the cage as a somewhat out-of-shape version of himself.

The flight home from London all those months ago was a hard one. The somewhat clear path back to the UFC at that time had gotten murky. It wasn't going to be as easy as he thought it was going to be.

There wasn't really a fight in his immediate future at that point. It came time to make a hard decision. Fighting would be cast aside for the time being. The mines were calling.

The mines did him good — both financially and mentally. It was hard work, not much different to the hard days spent in the lead-up to a professional fight. Most of the time it could probably be argued that the money earned while working in the mines was better — much better.

It's not all about money, though. The dollars that were hitting the bank account would always help, but the passion and the burning desire that Alloway still had when it came to fighting was always going to surpass everything else.

"I was contemplating life and retirement and I kinda just figured I had to make money for my family," Alloway said. "I just wanted to take time away

from MMA just to decide whether I really still loved it. You don't wanna continue doing things — especially MMA — for the wrong reasons. It was a bit of a break from everything and from my life at the time to clear my head and make sure a bit of money was coming in."

Even though the money was coming in thick and fast, it still didn't stop Alloway's mind from wandering back into the fighting arena. Sure, he was working a world away from his life inside the cage, but each time that he kicked his boots off at the end of the day, the question still remained — was fighting again really ever going to be on the cards?

"When I got offered the fight with Eternal [MMA], I took that on like four week's notice," Alloway said. "That was





pretty much gonna make the decision for me. It wasn't so much about the outcome of the fight, it was more about the lead-up to the fight and getting through the fight and seeing how I handled it. That was the thing that made me decide I still love doing it. I still love trying to make weight and the lead-up and the warm-ups, and then walking out to the cage, I still get the rush and still get the goosebumps on the back of my neck and it just made me realise that I wasn't quite done with fighting yet."

Although the fight itself helped make him realise just how much he missed competing, the lead-up to the bout itself didn't exactly go off without a hitch. For his first fight in almost a year, Alloway failed to make weight. For a professional

there is no worse feeling, and even though he was leading into the fight as a veteran of almost 20 fights, there was still something he could take away from the whole experience.

"I was a bit too confident that I could make weight even after having all that time off," Alloway said. "I was quite heavy when I decided to take the fight and just being a bit arrogant, I thought I could make weight without too much drama. Obviously, after not having to make weight for so long, my body wasn't used to it and I missed it. The fight itself wasn't a particularly hard fight but it was just another test for me."

Looking back, it has been a turbulent couple of years for Alloway when it comes to mixed martial arts. In 2013

he was fighting inside the UFC's famed Octagon, but back-to-back losses saw him lose his opportunity in the UFC as quickly as he was given it. That's the nature of the business, and while he could have looked at it as a sign that maybe this wasn't the right path for him, he instead used it to work out what was going to happen next.

"After doing *TUF* and getting the contract, I never really believed that I belonged in the UFC back then," Alloway said. "I always thought that I was a bit too inexperienced, I didn't really think I was good enough to be there. I was still a bit of a fan while I was fighting. Getting cut from the UFC and then signing with Cage Warriors again and travelling to Europe gave me a bit of





**"I'M CONFIDENT THAT I CAN GET ANOTHER SHOT AND I'M GONNA FOCUS ALL MY ENERGY ON THAT."**

that experience that I didn't really have. I know that I belong there now. I think it was a great thing that I got cut in the first place because it made me grow a lot more as a fighter and I think I'm 10 times the fighter now than what I was back then.

"I think [*TUF*] definitely takes away your ability to get experience in MMA. Even though I had quite a few fights, I still didn't have the experience, like that real fight experience. It has only been the last 12 to 18 months that I feel that I've gotten that. You see a lot of guys, they do *TUF* and they get their crack in the UFC and they lose one or lose two and then get cut, and you never hear from them again. I've always wondered, why aren't those guys still fighting or trying to get back there? And I guess that ran through my mind when I took the break after *Cage Warriors*."

Since he was cut loose from the UFC, Alloway has managed to win three out of four bouts. His last fight saw him meet Rick Alchin at BRACE 36. In the lead-up to the fight, Alloway vowed to knock Alchin out. While Alloway couldn't walk away with the knockout to his name, the second-best thing happened when he won by way of submission in the second round.

"I was a bit disappointed that I couldn't finish the fight the way that I wanted to," Alloway said. "But, it made me 100 per cent sure that I wanted to have another crack at one of the big shows. I'm confident that I can get another shot and I'm gonna focus all my energy on that."

Not only has Alloway garnered a new focus on his career, life outside of the cage has started to pick up as well. In July, Alloway opened the BBA [Benny Blanco Alloway] Mixed Martial Arts Fitness Facility and just a few months in, his business has been lifting off. With an influx of new members, Alloway now has another vision for where he wants his facility to end up. He wants his facility to become a destination for fighters from all around the world and with the help of a coach, and mentor, with a worldwide reach, he believes that he can do just that.

Alloway's manager, Marc Fiore, has a proven track record when it comes to training some of the sport's elite athletes.







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Fiore founded the H.I.T. Squad with Matt Hughes and was also the former UFC champion's coach during his championship reign. Alloway has been linked with Fiore for most of his career and he has big plans to bring the acclaimed coach to his new facility to bring a point of difference to training on the Gold Coast.

"He's the ticket to the big show," Alloway said. "He has put countless guys in the UFC and we are looking to build a destination training centre here on the Gold Coast. The way I look at it is that if you're serious about getting your career somewhere and you live around this area, you'd be crazy not to come and train with him. He has a proven track record. We're looking to try and build a camp where guys are gonna come from all over to do their camp up here on the Gold Coast."

"We're looking to make it like what the H.I.T. Squad used to be; everyone from around the world was going there to do their camp with Fiore, they'd go in and do their six weeks and they'd go and do their fight. That's the kind of thing we wanna build here on the Gold Coast — it's a tourist destination; you travel here, you do your six weeks and you have a training holiday on the beach and you go away and do your fight. We're going to have a world-class MMA coach who is in the USA Wrestling Hall of Fame and who has

also coached an Olympic team — why wouldn't people wanna come here?"

Opening his new business, Alloway ensured that he catered to the wide variety of people that are drawn to martial arts. Inside the gym he offers a wide array of kids classes with the hope of building the next generation of Australian martial artists. It's not all about breeding fighters for Alloway, though, and he ensures that he instils the values of a martial artist in all of his up-and-coming students. For Alloway it's not about the kids ticking boxes and moving from one martial art to the next; instead it's about development and helping them build the best all-round skill set that they can.

"I've got kids coming into the gym who don't wanna be NRL players; they wanna be UFC fighters," Alloway said. "I think with kids they have to get involved and learn everything. A lot of kids will go and learn jiu-jitsu and then learn Muay Thai and then put it together. They need to learn wrestling and actually learn MMA from a young age instead of trying to switch from one thing to the other. Some of the kids that I've got at the gym now are learning the whole package from a young age and that's going to be the best base for them to build on."

Alloway's next bout is set to take place at BRACE 37 in Canberra, when he squares off with Theo Christakos

for the 2015 BRACE Welterweight Championship. With two wins in a row, this bout is set to be one of the most important of his career, and with BRACE now being aired via the UFC's digital network — Fight Pass — it's going to get him back into the mind of fans and international matchmakers alike.

"It's always a dangerous fight no matter who I am going in there with these days," Alloway said. "You can look at it as if I've always got something to lose and my opponent has everything to gain. Christakos, he's got a really seasoned jiu-jitsu coach. He's only had four fights and he hasn't really fought any high-calibre fighters, but that's the type of fight where, if I take it easy and don't train properly and don't give him the kind of respect he deserves, it's the kind of fight that I could easily lose. I'm not really that worried about him but I'm still preparing like it's a world title fight — I wanna go in there and finish him and I wanna do what I did in the Tristan Murphy fight."

"I wanna show people that there are still levels in MMA over here — it's not about winning a couple of fights on the local scene and then you're a big deal. I just wanna go in there and show him that I'm on a different level and show anyone that's watching on Fight Pass that I'm still a world-class fighter and I'm ready to get back to the big show." 📺



**"IT'S ALWAYS A DANGEROUS FIGHT  
NO MATTER WHO I AM GOING IN  
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# FRENEMIES

**URIJAH FABER AND HIS WEIRD  
RELATIONSHIP WITH CONOR MCGREGOR**



In a lot of ways, Urijah Faber and Conor McGregor are very similar people: extremely driven, charismatic, businessmen and stars of the UFC who both understand the pressures of the fighting game – but to say they have become friends while filming *TUF* would be a little bit of a stretch.

BY SUBMISSION RADIO // PHOTOS BY GETTY





### What was it like coaching against Conor McGregor during TUF?

You know, it's interesting. You know Cruz and I don't really like each other, Conor and I have a, you know, a funny relationship. We like to talk crap to each other, but I actually think he's a decent dude. And I think as a competitor, I think he's a guy that likes to win and so it makes for a good competition. I was pretty pumped about it.

### You two do seem to have a very interesting relationship.

Well I mean, we've had it on a couple occasions where we start talking

and start [getting] into physical confrontations. But I think it's [that] both of us like to, I mean we're both fighters and just, you know, when personal space gets invaded. But I mean it never really crossed the line. Like tempers never flared too bad, etcetera. He can take a joke, I can dish it out and take a joke as well, and so there's a lot of banter back and forth, and hopefully down the line some sort of fight between us.

### It sounds like you're almost friends at this point, like you have a brotherly bond going on.

Ahhh I don't know about that. You'll have to check out the show and judge for yourself.

### Would you like to fight Conor in the future?

Yeah, I mean I got into this sport to fight all the best guys, and I think match-up wise, as much as he is in denial about it, his grappling was exposed a little bit. And he's a big, strong guy for the weight class. He knows how to stay in it, he knows how to capitalise, but you know, our guy

Chad [Mendes] rolled off the couch and basically had his way with him on the ground. So I think it's a good match-up.

It's a good match-up for me and it's a fight that we don't know if it's gonna happen, but I'd be all for it.

### You've said in a previous interview that Conor likes the back and forth until he gets manhandled.

Both times we've got into it physically it's been, you know, he seems okay, like putting his hands on me, and then I put my hands on him and then we start moving around a little bit and, you know, [at this point] we're just getting to know each other. We

don't really know [each other].

We see each other in passing, etcetera, and

this is the first time we've been forced to be

**HE CAN TAKE A JOKE, I CAN DISH IT OUT AND TAKE A JOKE AS WELL, AND SO THERE'S A LOT OF BANTER BACK AND FORTH, AND HOPEFULLY DOWN THE LINE SOME SORT OF FIGHT BETWEEN US.**

in each other's presence every day. So I think that was pretty accurate. It hasn't really happened again since the first two times, but I would say that was accurate.

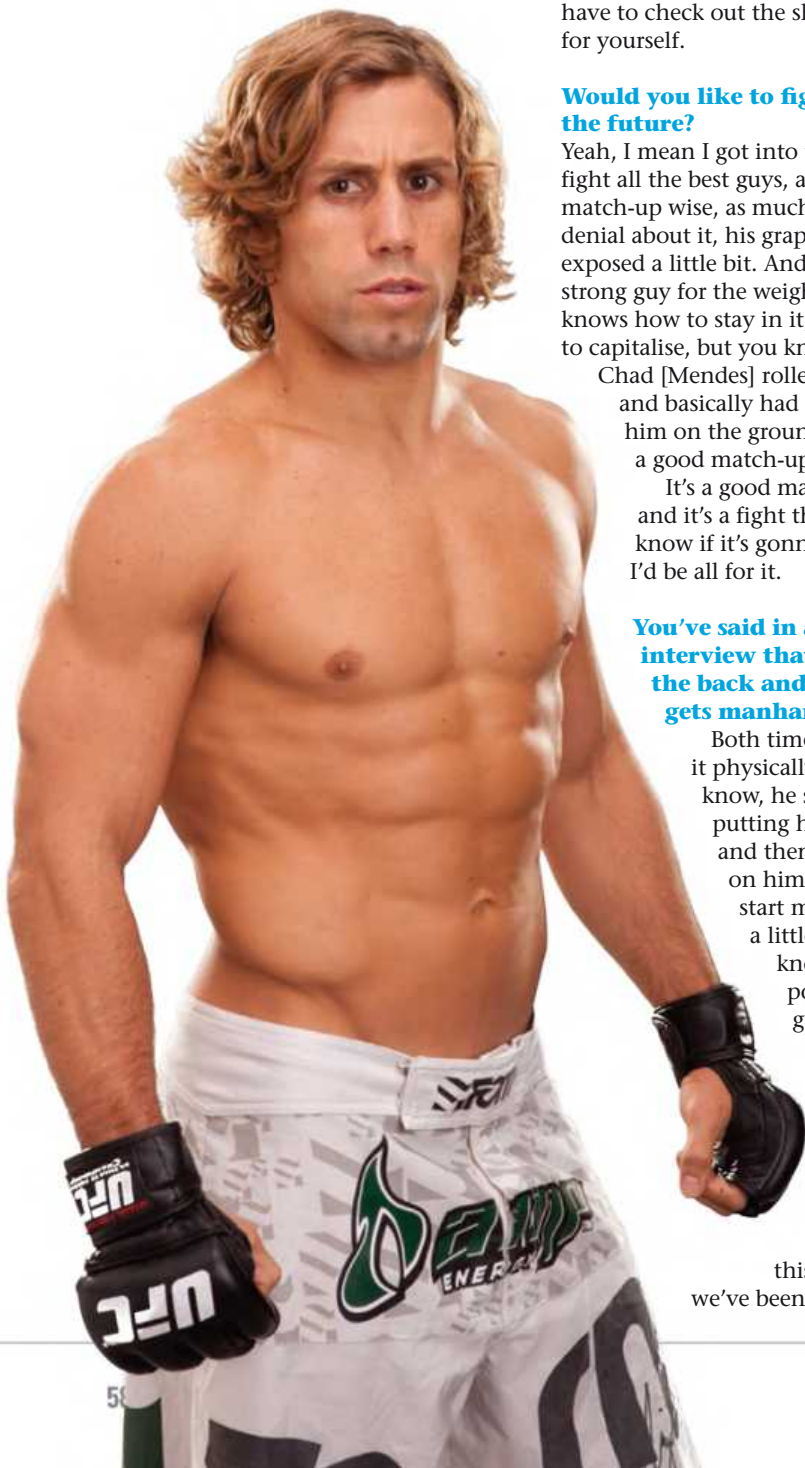
### Do you think the manhandling from the run-ins will translate into a fight with Conor?

Well, I mean, here's the honest truth, I'm a former champion, top contender for my entire career, I'm a very durable guy, but I have the most submissions in Pride, UFC and WEC history. So that's one of the things I've excelled at, and that's one of the things that Conor — and from what I've seen and from his past, he's got two losses that are from submissions.

We saw the way Chad was able to handle him on the ground. So for me it's a good match-up. Now is Conor a dangerous guy? He's probably about, maybe 20 pounds heavier than I am walking around, which means I'll probably be a little faster, he may be a little stronger. But it would be a dangerous fight of course, but for both of us. I'm confident I can submit him and I'm sure he feels like he can knock me out, and we both have trained in the other guy's strengths. So I think it will make an interesting match-up.

### Do you have plans on fighting at 145 and are there any fights in the works for you at the moment?

There's been talk about a couple of different names that I can't mention because it's not official, but there's talk about having me fight in December, I think December 11th, the day before Conor and Aldo fight. It's not 100 per



cent sure, though. And yeah, the weight cut is terrible, but this is the highest level of mixed martial arts and you have to sacrifice at times.

So I feel like I compete really well at 145 and 135. So it depends on the fights that make the most sense, the pathway to where I wanna be, the pathway to making the most money out of this career. So I'm willing to stay at 145 and I'm willing to go down to 135. It's just gonna be kind of dependent on what the future match-ups are and I gotta have conversations with Joe Silva and Sean Shelby on that front.

**Do you think TJ Dillashaw will have a shot against Conor McGregor in a super-fight?**

Oh, of course he would have a shot. I mean, here's the honest truth, Conor McGregor is very good, TJ Dillashaw is very good. When you look at different factors, here's something that's for sure. Conor is a much bigger guy than TJ, TJ is a much faster guy than McGregor, and speed is an important thing. Conor's not slow, but TJ is much smaller. He's not huge for the weight class, TJ.

**WELL, I MEAN, HERE'S THE HONEST TRUTH, I'M A FORMER CHAMPION, TOP CONTENDER FOR MY ENTIRE CAREER, I'M A VERY DURABLE GUY, BUT I HAVE THE MOST SUBMISSIONS IN PRIDE, UFC AND WEC HISTORY.**

So on top of his striking ability and the ability to wrestle — 'cause he's a lifetime wrestler. His dad was an All-American wrestler, his brothers are wrestlers. TJ is a more well-rounded fighter. I mean, the x-factor there again comes into the power. Conor is a big, big guy for the weight class, but I mean, this is the era to be seeing fights like that. And as far as money goes and getting a fight that would really showcase TJ, I think that's a great fight as well.

**And TJ has had confrontations with McGregor in the past, hasn't he?**

It's funny 'cause Conor and I have been around each other and have an interesting relationship, but him and TJ on two different occasions have gotten into it with things escalating to, you know, them kind of bad mouthing each other. So there's a little tension there as well and I think that's a good fight the fans would love to see.

One time TJ and Conor and I in the back of the Ronda Rousey fight in LA, we were in just a private little bar with celebrities and the UFC brass and words were exchanged, and TJ was talking about Conor's title shot and Conor went back and forth and they were getting on each other's







nerve, really. So I think they ended up having to be split up a little bit.

### Has Chad been in the gym and helping Team Faber in *TUF*?

You know, I spoke about the fact that Chad and I were raised different, and I think people were getting that misconstrued. Chad has been raised since he was five or six years old by his awesome pop, Alvino — ‘the great Alvino’ we call him — as like a lifetime competitor. Since he was a little kid he’s had the best coaches, he’s gone to big tournaments, he’s a pre-teen state national level wrestler, in junior high and high school, he’s a stand-out wrestler in college, he’s a combatant and a national finalist.

The guy values his time off. I didn’t start wrestling till I was 12 or 13, so I had to go, go, go. Chad has

super valued his time off. An off-season in wrestling means that he gets to go hunting and fishing, but he needs those breaks to stay sane. So even in his fight game, when he’s off-season, he’s off-season.

So right now Chad is probably hot on the trails of some sort of big-game animal or dressed in some turkey feathers, hiding in a bush or trying to lasso a pig. I mean the guy is out hunting and that’s what his real passion is, in addition to being a competitor. So he’s loving life, Chad’s living the dream, man. He’s prepared to be a world champion and he’s enjoying his time off. So we haven’t seen him there in the gym this time around.

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**HE'S A BULLY, HE'S DONE THINGS THAT HAVE REALLY RUBBED ME THE WRONG WAY AS FAR AS BUILDING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT, AND I FEEL BAD FOR THE PEOPLE THAT ARE STUCK WITH HIM, BECAUSE HE TAKES AND HE TAKES AND HE TAKES, AND IT'S NOT THE WAY THAT I BUILT MY TEAM AND I DON'T APPRECIATE HIS NEGATIVITY.**


**Is there still some ill will towards Duane Ludwig after his Twitter comments?**

You know, I've tried to keep it real personal because I don't want to air dirty laundry necessarily, but it's just kind of sad. Duane is a guy that was really, really down and out when I gave him a call, and I've just learned that dysfunction kind of follows that guy. So we've brought him into a great situation

and really tried to hoist him up, and to see him bad-mouthing the team is kind of sad, you know?

We've done a lot for him and he's been out of our gym for maybe a year and a half, and to see a guy like talk about guys he hasn't even been around for a year and a half, like he knows what the heck they're even up to, is kind of strange. Especially guys that have really gone out of their way to help promote a guy, because he was

pretty emotional about how down and out he was at the time. So it's just unfortunate, man.

There's some guys that, no matter the opportunity, seem to stab themselves in the foot. And from my standpoint, what I've seen from him, I don't like the way he treats people. He's a bully, he's done things that have really rubbed me the wrong way as far as building a positive environment, and I feel bad for the people that are stuck with him, because he takes and he takes and he takes, and it's not the way that I built my team and I don't appreciate his negativity. So for me, I'm done with the guy. 

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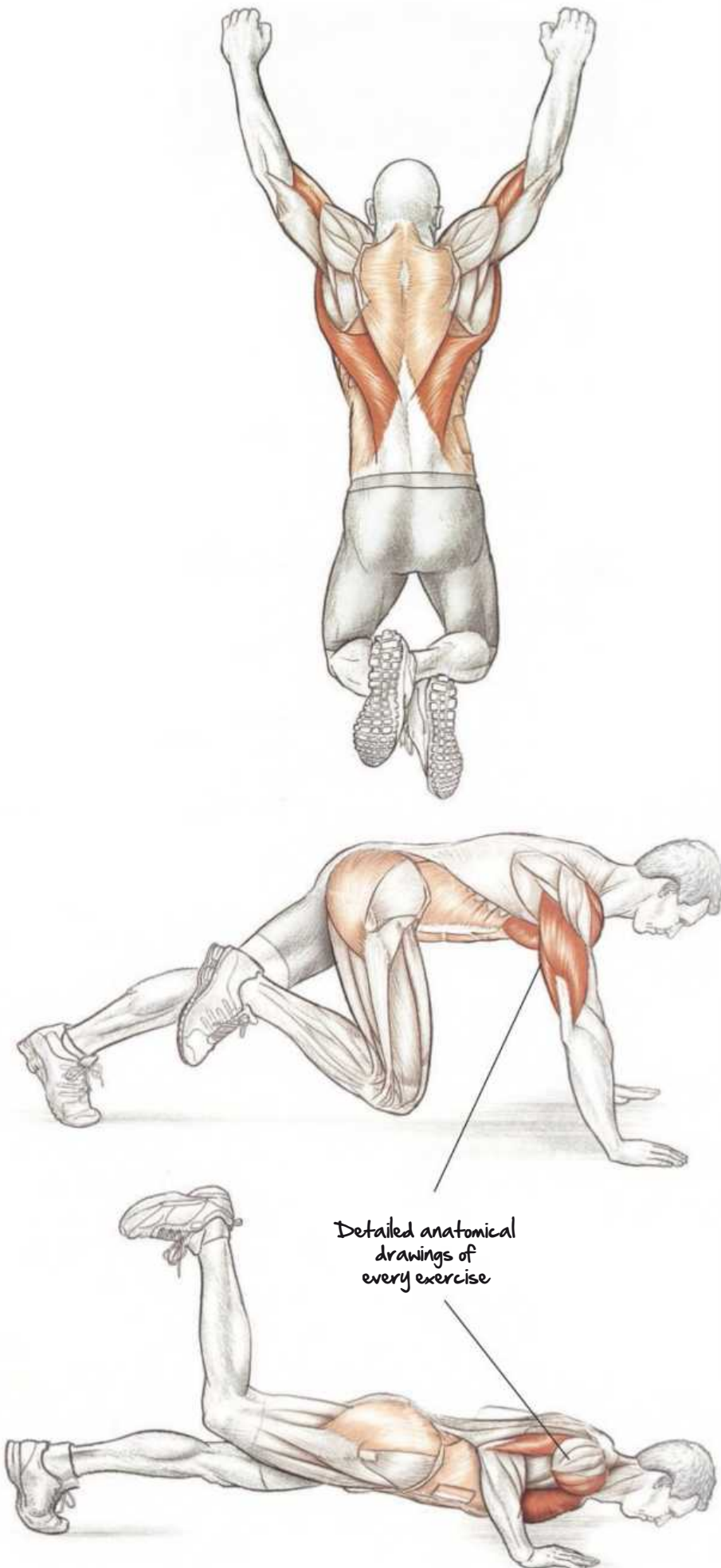
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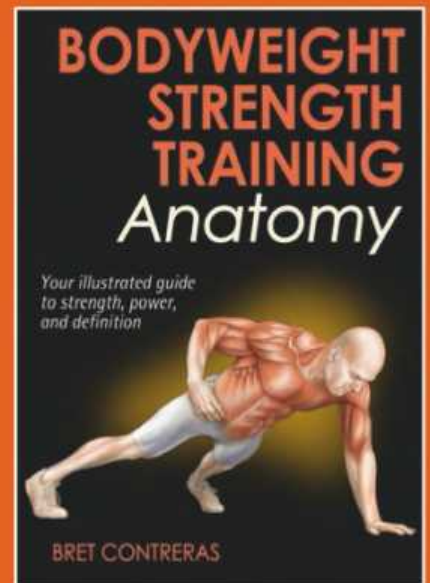
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# FREE AT LAST



# THE SAGA OF THE CAGE

**Earlier this year, the Victorian Government gave the green light for caged mixed martial arts bouts to take place in their state, opening the door for a possible record-shattering UFC event at Etihad Stadium.**

BY JUSTIN FAUX

**J**ohn Eren, the Victorian Labor Sports Minister, made the official announcement at a press junket this past March. Before that day, mixed martial arts bouts held in the state could only be contested inside a roped boxing ring and not a purpose-built cage, such as the UFC's Octagon.

Fight promoters who disobeyed the ban and staged an event inside a fenced-in enclosure would have previously faced fines of up to \$12,000 or 12 months jail — a steep price just to “keep your guys safe”, said Australian Fighting Championships (AFC) promoter Adam Milankovic.

“At the end of the day I’m responsible for these guys,” Milankovic told *FIGHT!* magazine. “I get to know these guys, and become friends with them, and I want to put them in the safest working environment possible. That didn’t happen (fighting in a ring).”

Milankovic certainly knows the dangers of hosting fights inside a roped fighting arena. During a 2013 fight presented by AFC, local Brazilian jiu-jitsu wizard Gustavo Falciroli landed a pair of devastating knees to his opponent, Kaiwhare Kara-France. Kara-France stumbled backward after the second knee, crashing through the middle rope and slamming his head on a ringside table. As a result, the fight was declared a no contest.

“I knocked him down on the second round but he fell out of the ring and thought I got the KO win (but) the judges ruled it as a ‘no contest’, which

was bad for me, but there was nothing I could do about it,” Falciroli said.

Milankovic, who got so frustrated with the cage ban that he even took an AFC event out of Victoria following this incident, was among the thousands of fighters, fans and promoters who were overjoyed to see the cage restriction get scrapped.

“This is a major milestone for mixed martial arts in Victoria,” said Tom Wright, UFC executive vice-president and general manager for Australia in an official press release. “(It) will allow the sport to flourish while at the same time better protecting its competing athletes.”

UFC heavyweight knockout artist Mark Hunt was also quick to add his support: “Just like a jockey needs a horse or a tennis player needs a racquet or a V8 driver needs a car – mixed martial artists, UFC fighters need the Octagon,” he said. “It’s our tool for competition – to make competition fair and safe. I’m excited that the UFC can now come to Melbourne.”

Less than a fortnight after the historic announcement, the Melbourne Pavilion hosted the first Victorian caged combat event since 2008. Local promotion HEX Fight Series were thrilled to welcome the cage back to the Garden State.

“A big thank you to the State Government of Victoria and to the Labor Party,” the evening’s ring announcer shouted to begin the event, which was headlined by a gruelling three-round bout between local star Nick Patterson and UFC cast-off Ben Wall.





A sell-out crowd of 1,600 packed the small venue for the night's fights. Some paid top dollar, forking over \$3,000 to be wined and dined while they absorbed the action. Others were happier to observe the action from a spot in the cheap seats.

The lengthy fight card featured 12 bouts, with top Aussie fighters from Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia all represented on the show. There were knockouts, chokeholds, and blood-soaked fights, but no serious injuries were sustained while competing inside the fenced-in cage.

Few are more excited to witness fights taking place inside a chain-linked fence than UFC's Tom Wright. The 62-year-old Canadian businessman has been in charge of operations in Australia for almost three years, with one of his key objectives from the start being to unlock the state of Victoria.

"Towards the end of 2012 I was asked to take over responsibilities for the UFC

in Australia and New Zealand," Wright said. "Prior to that, I had been focused on Canada but I had some experience on the regulatory side with similar kinds of headwinds here in Canada. I had an experienced team to work with me, and it made sense for Australia and New Zealand to fold into my overall responsibilities."

Beginning in 2013, Wright began taking up to five tours of Australia per year, meeting with the decision makers all over the country. "My first trip from a regulatory perspective would've been in early 2013 and at that time I believe that Ted Baillieu was the Liberal leader, Hugh Delahunty was the Sports Minister and Louise Asher was the Minister of Major Events. I reached out to all of them, but it took quite a while before I was able to even meet with Mr Delahunty," he said. "We needed the Octagon ban, or fence-in enclosure ban, lifted, and it wasn't an active act of legislation. All it required was a letter from the Sports Minister to the head of the Victorian government to reverse the decision that was made in 2008 by Brumby's Labor party."

Wright brought "all the facts and data on safety" to the Liberal Party, and while the UFC representative recalls that everyone was respectful and polite,

he soon figured out that his cries were falling on deaf ears. "It really didn't take me very long to recognise that the Liberal Government at that time, with Baillieu, Delahunty and Asher, really were not prepared to change their position," he added.

By his own admission, Wright became frustrated during the verbal back-and-forth tussling with political figures, who clearly had no intentions of budging an inch.

"The thing that bothered me the most was that people were so entrenched in their positions, but they'd never been to an event, they'd never spoken to one of our athletes, they'd never visited a training facility, they'd never spoken to anyone with an organisation like the UFC, yet they had this entrenched position that was purely emotional, without any basis in facts or data."

Supporting Wright's message of safety is UFC founder Art Davie, who was among the team who designed the Octagon from scratch before the promotion's pay-per-view debut in 1993. Davie's partner, Brazilian jiu-jitsu icon Rorion Gracie, made it clear from the beginning that a boxing ring just wouldn't cut it when dealing with mixed rules fighting.

BY HIS OWN  
ADMISSION,  
WRIGHT BECAME  
FRUSTRATED  
DURING THE  
VERBAL BACK-  
AND-FORTH  
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CLEARLY HAD NO  
INTENTIONS OF  
BUDGING AN INCH.



UFC's Tom Wright

Since the 1920s, the Gracies had a history of defending the family's honour in competition by accepting all challengers to their supremacy. These were typically referred to as 'Gracie Challenge' matches, and often took place on sand floors, with a tarp covering the ground.

Rorion's father, Helio, was praised as the family's greatest fighter during the 1940s and '50s. The scrawny Brazilian champion made a name for himself during this period with a series of high-profile matches against professional wrestlers and judokas in Rio de Janeiro.

Several of these matches were contested inside a roped ring, and it soon became clear to the family that the four-sided fighting surface is only ideal for boxing or professional wrestling matches after competitors constantly got tangled in the ropes and even fell between them.

"We knew the ring wasn't safe," Davie recalls. "At the same time, fighters rolling around on the floor in dirt wasn't fitting for a television property either."

Davie gave an outline for the ideal fighting surface to Greg Harrison and Jason Cusson, a pair of set designers from California, to create a few sketches. It couldn't have ropes, it had to somehow keep the fighters from falling

to the ground and causing injury, and it had to be 30 feet in diameter (six feet larger than a standard boxing ring).

Aside from that, the creative duo were given the freedom to think big. Ideas included a cage surrounded by a moat filled with alligators, plexiglass walls, and even electrocuted fences. Eventually the group settled on the structure that we today call the Octagon — an eight-sided structure, enclosed by a chain-linked fence, and surrounded by an outer catwalk.

"Safety was at the top of our minds. We had other ideas with nets and other forms of fencing, but none looked as effective as the chain fence," Davie says.

In the year-and-a-half preceding the 2015 Victorian election, UFC's Wright was attempting to champion the virtues of athletes safety to the Coalition Party, but it was a slow and frustrating dance for the former Canadian Football League (CFL) commissioner.

Wright eventually found an ally in Labor Sports Minister John Eren. The Geelong-based politician was once a major detractor of mixed martial arts, but has since altered his position.

"I've found in many different circumstances when you're trying to change government regulations and

you're trying to dispel some of these myths, you need to find an internal champion," Wright says. "I can speak 'til I'm blue in the face, and bring in athletes to represent us. I can show the economic impact, but you always need an internal champion."

Wright was at the forefront of the UFC's battle in the Canadian province of Ontario to legalise mixed martial arts between 2010 and 2011. Finding an associate who understood the sport within Canadian politics served the company well, and they followed that exact same blueprint in Australia as well.

"(They) can speak to their fellow cabinet members as a peer. When (opposing politicians) spoke to me, they would say, 'you're conflicted, you obviously have a conflict of interest,' but it's different for an internal champion," he says.

"In Victoria, our internal champion was John Eren. I met with John on

**SAFETY WAS AT THE TOP OF OUR MINDS. WE HAD OTHER IDEAS WITH NETS AND OTHER FORMS OF FENCING, BUT NONE LOOKED AS EFFECTIVE AS THE CHAIN FENCE**

Gustavo Falciroli flies through the ropes at AFC



JOSH STEBBINGS





several occasions, I invited him to attend events so he could actually see why we have a fenced-in enclosure that we call the Octagon, and why we put health and safety first and foremost, why we feel a boxing ring doesn't give a level playing field, why it's important to see what happens at one of our events and how professional we are, and how you don't want to turn a sport underground."

Eren promised the UFC, and dozens of reporters, that he would overturn the cage ban in a heartbeat. The only roadblock was that his Labor Party were not in power.

The Labor team, headed by eventual premier Daniel Andrews, made it apparent in their 2015 campaign that if they were the majority vote-getter in the election, they would bring caged combat to the "sporting capital of Australia".

Many public figures stood up in opposition of overturning the ban, most notably Police Chief Commissioner Ken Lay, who warned that allowing "cage fighting" would lead to more violence in the state.

"It concerns me when we start considering cage fighting in the world's most liveable city, especially when we're seeing such great progress in

reducing violence in our community," Mr Lay said at a press event. "It would be disappointing if we went down the path of glamourising this extreme violence."

The Coalition government made it clear in the lead-up to the election that they had no plans of removing the fenced-in enclosure ban. Sports Minister Damian Drum added that Mr Lay's views contributed to their position to keep the ban on caged mixed martial arts.

They took it a step further in the days and weeks leading into the election, running regular television ads on Victorian television slamming the violent combat sport.

One video package featured a saddened young girl, cradling a small child. To the side of her read the text "Only the Napthine Coalition will protect families from all forms of violence. We will keep the ban on cage fighting."

These last-minute bids to steal votes were concerning to many Labor supporters, but Wright saw it as an excellent sign. "I knew they were desperate," he said. "They all said 'Daniel Andrews will legalise cage fighting'. Well, news flash: mixed martial arts is already legal, and always has been.

All the (Labor) government was saying was 'we're gonna make it safe'.

"I remember seeing those ads that the Napthine government were putting out. Labor was in the lead in the polls, so when I saw those attack

The Hulk isn't happy about WA cage laws!



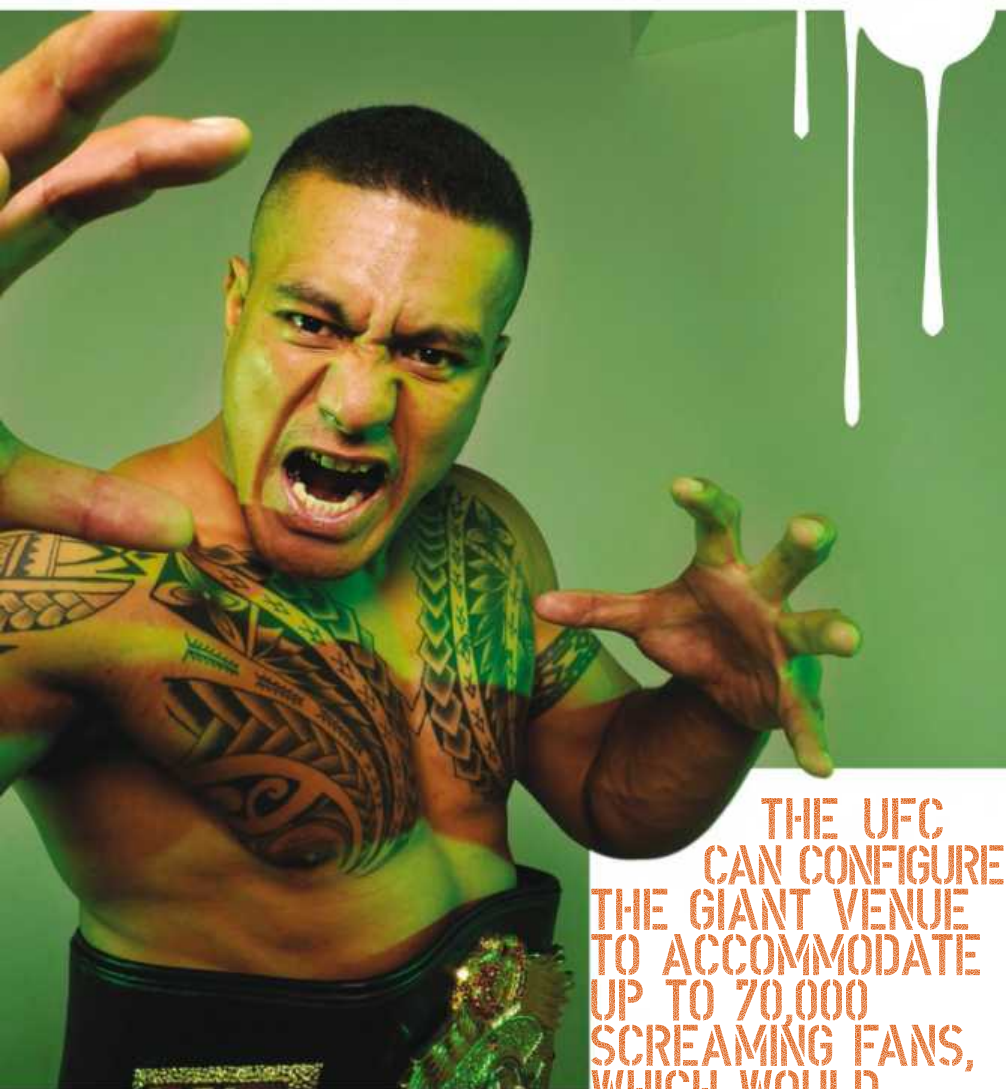
adverts, I thought to myself, 'these guys are so desperate. They're gonna lose.'"

The Andrews-led Labor government regained power last November. In his first speech, the new premier vowed to stick to his guns: "The people of Victoria have today given to us the greatest of gifts, entrusted to us the greatest of responsibilities and bestowed upon us the greatest of honours," Mr. Andrews said. "We will not let them down."

The Government followed through with their plan to overturn the cage ban in March, which has opened the door for one of the biggest UFC events in history.

UFC middleweight Robert Whittaker, who will compete in one of the featured bouts at UFC 193 against hard-hitting striker Uriah Hall, was over the moon: "This progress in Melbourne is an amazing opportunity for the Australian MMA community. The UFC is already bringing more events

John Eren



**THE UFC  
CAN CONFIGURE  
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UP TO 70,000  
SCREAMING FANS,  
WHICH WOULD  
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to Australia and this new destination opens up more opportunities for aspiring mixed martial artists."

Perhaps the most relieved to get the ban overturned was Wright, who was quick to thank everyone who helped along the way. "It was a matter of when, not if, the ban was overturned," said Wright. "It was a team effort for us to convince the Labor government to change their policy, and I felt really happy for the athletes — for guys like Daniel Kelly, who always wanted to have a chance to compete in his backyard, or for Anthony Perosh, who travelled with me to Perth and Melbourne to sit down with ministers and argue alongside me very passionately and objectively."

The elite mixed martial arts promotion is set to make their Melbourne premiere on 15 November inside Etihad Stadium with a pay-per-view event headlined by UFC women's

bantamweight and pound-for-pound queen Ronda Rousey battling former boxing champion Holly Holm.

The UFC can configure the giant venue to accommodate up to 70,000 screaming fans, which would set a world record for the promotion. Skeptics doubt that the UFC can attract an audience that large, especially with ticket prices in excess of \$500 for a great seat.

Wright isn't sure if they will shatter the record, but admits that he would be happy to just beat their personal best. "The current record is 55,724 (for a UFC event), so I'll be happy with 55,725!" he laughs.

The promotion's best chance of drawing a sellout crowd to Melbourne

will rest largely upon Rousey drawing in a unique audience, with a blend of different ages and demographics.

The unbeaten former Olympian made a huge impact in her first visit Down Under, and Wright expects lightning to strike twice. "She is truly transformational. She is a remarkable athlete, and a remarkable individual. She has a tireless work ethic, and she's completely committed."

"She really pulls in so many demographics. Male or female, young or old, athlete or non-athlete, and fight fan or non-fight fan. Fighters like (Rousey) don't come around often, so it's remarkable for her to be in this role while we're trying to introduce this sport to as many people within Australia who don't understand it and haven't taken the time to find out about it."

Bringing the UFC to Victoria is a career highlight for Wright, but he is always quick to point out that the fight isn't over yet in Australia. The cage ban is still in force throughout Western Australia, with both major political sides showing no interest in making changes.

"Cage fighting involves the use of knees, legs; it strikes me as very, very violent and I'm concerned about the impact it has on spectators," WA Labor leader Mark McGowan recently told *WA Today*. "We don't have any plans to change our position; I'd need to see a lot of evidence before I did."

So, Wright will have to put on the figurative boxing gloves and return to the battle, but he's optimistic that with Victoria changing their tune, it will speed up the process for a UFC visit in Perth.

"With Victoria seeing the light, if I can use that term, and becoming enlightened about fighters' safety and fighters' equality, WA will follow suit."

Perth-based smashing machine Soa 'The Hulk' Palelei is also optimistic that the UFC will be in WA sooner rather than later. "Being able to fight in the UFC is a dream come true. Being able to compete in Australia is the icing on the cake. I'm extremely proud to be Australian and being able to do what I love for my country is truly gratifying. With Melbourne now able to host the UFC, I can see MMA growing immensely and I cannot wait till Perth also gets on board." 🇦🇺

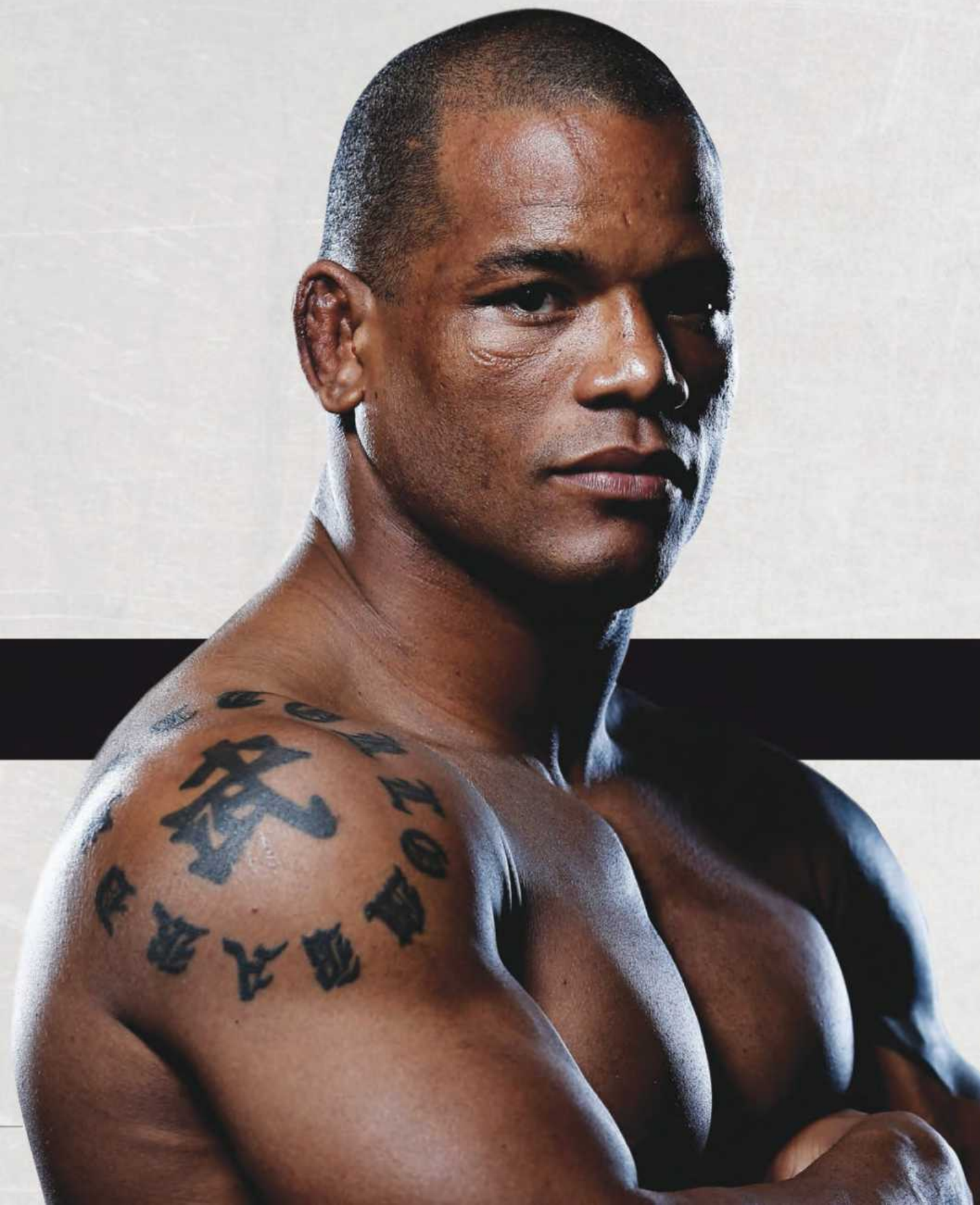
#### CONNECT WITH US







HECTOR LOMBARD





# WAITING IN THE WINGS

Hector Lombard eagerly  
awaits his return

**He may not be able to return to competition until 3 January 2016, but Hector Lombard is desperate to get his name back in the welterweight title picture, and the other 170-pounders haven't been impressing him in his absence.**

BY SUBMISSION RADIO

**You've been focusing on your grappling; will we see a more dangerous ground game from you when you return to MMA?**

Yeah, yeah that's my point. Before, I sort of like was going for the knockout, I would always go for the KO. Now, because of the time I've been working on my ground game, I believe if it goes to the ground I'm not gonna let the guys stand up. I'm just gonna try and keep it on the floor and submit the guy.

**Do you still want to be in the Rio Olympics next year representing Australia in judo?**

Unfortunately not, because next year I want to be focused on MMA, and it's too soon. I have no time to go — even if I make it to the Olympics, I don't wanna just go to the Olympics, you know? I just wanna go and place for a medal or win it. My first Olympics, I competed like a year. I made the Olympic team in like a year and three months. So when I competed with those guys up there, I wasn't ready because I made the Olympic team in less than a year and a half. So all those guys that I competed against, they had four years of preparation. So I don't want it to happen to me again.

**So are you done with the Olympics, or are you still going to try and participate in the 2020 Olympics when you're done with MMA?**

Yeah, once I compete a lot in MMA and I sit back again, definitely. I wanna do judo and BJJ, I wanna do it all. I wanna do judo, I want to do MMA, I want to do BJJ. And not because I say it, because I can.

**How do you think Robbie Lawler vs. Carlos Condit will play out?**

Robbie's gonna smash this guy. Robbie's gonna smash him. Robbie's gonna smash Carlos. He's just tougher. He's a tough guy. I mean he imposes his will.





**What do you think of Hendricks being passed over for a title shot?**

Remember, at the end of the day this is entertainment. If you're just gonna be a blanket, no one wants to [see you fight], especially the Australian card. Australians, they want to see the toughness. It's such a big event. They don't want to see a blanket. Do you know what a blanket means?

**It's what you would call a fighter that relies heavily on takedowns.**

Right, right [they] just stay there and whatever.

**And you would feel that's what Johnny Hendricks did in the second Robbie Lawler fight, correct?**

And he did it after with the other fight [Matt Brown]. He's just a blanket.

**What did you think about the Robbie Lawler vs. Rory MacDonald war?**

Look, it was a close fight, it was a close fight and the tougher guy won.

**If you're just gonna be a blanket, no one wants to [see you fight], especially the Australian card. Australians, they want to see the toughness.**

**Where does the animosity you have towards Rory MacDonald stem from?**

I mean everyone is calling me out now, man. I love that, but what I don't like is I was like a year without a fight because they didn't wanna fight me. Now everyone wants to fight me. Hopefully next year, when I come back in a few months, I still have all these offers and everyone wants to fight me.

**Would you be interested in a fight with Patrick Cote?**

I called him out before and he didn't answer. I called him out twice, he was nowhere to be found. So whatever, man. I called him out twice, I wanted to get on the Australian card, I was

looking for an opponent. I was supposed to fight Tyron [Woodley], it didn't happen, and then I kept looking for a fighter and I called him out and he didn't take the fight anyway. So I'm not too sure.

**How do you see the fight between you and MacDonald playing out?**

It would be an exciting fight. I mean, I like to stand up and bang. I see myself putting it on him anywhere the fight goes.

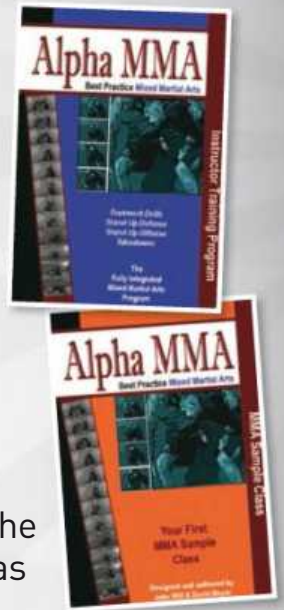
**Do you think fans will see a different Rory MacDonald after the massive shots he took in his Robbie Lawler fight?**

You might see a blanket.

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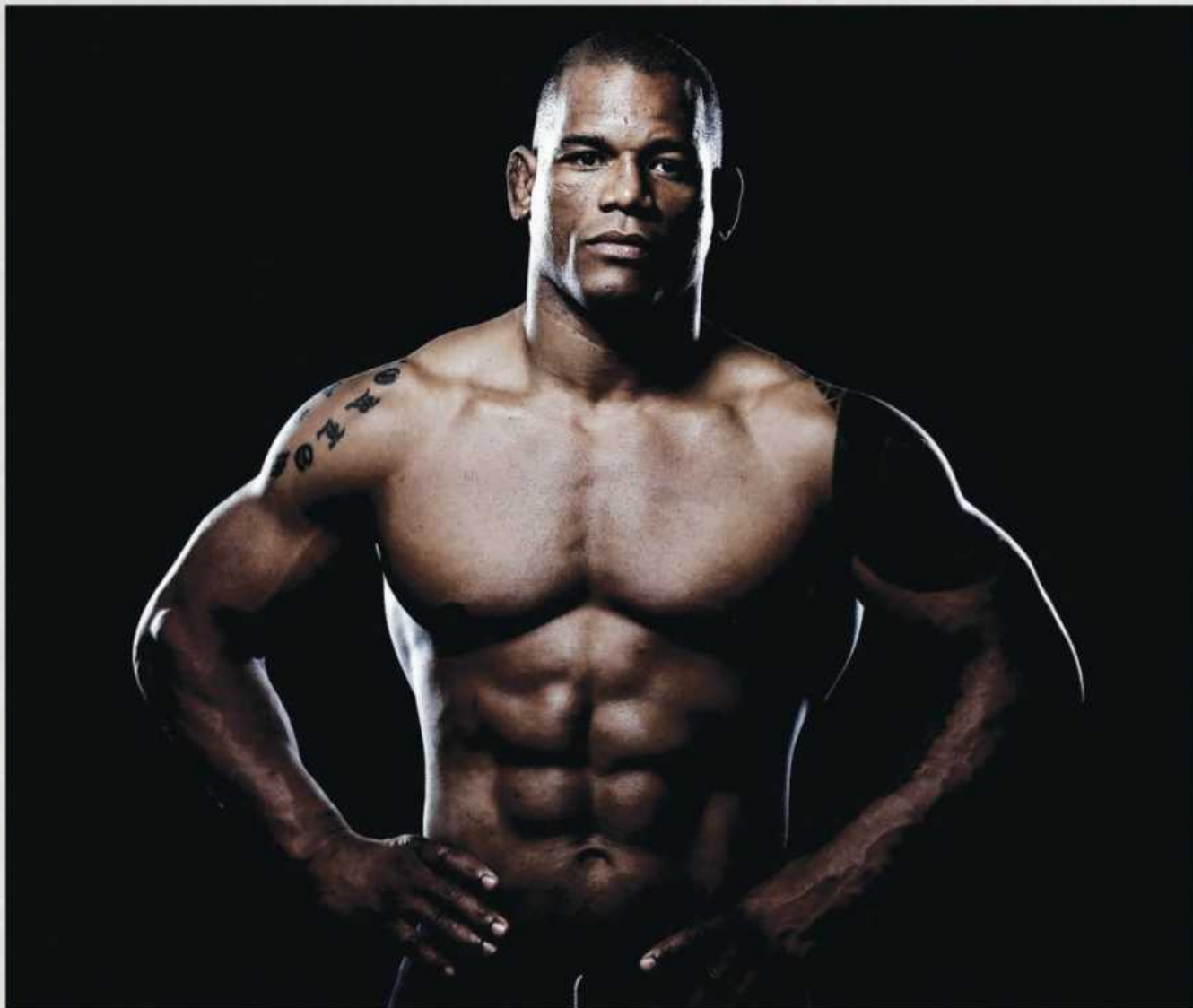
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**Do you see any side effects after some of the head shots you've taken throughout your career, and in training?**

I'm trying to hit and not be hit. I was being stupid before. Like, five or four years ago I would go toe-to-toe and start sparring with heavyweights and try to beat each other up in sparring. But I have to be a bit smart, because you [only] can take so much. But before I was like a bit stupid.

I would spar anybody, any heavyweight. I would spar kickboxers, anyone. I used to spar with 'Carnage' [Nathan Corbette], I would spar with Mark Hunt. I would spar with anybody. I would spar with anyone. And now I've become a bit smarter. I don't want to spar with none of these heavy guys, you know? They definitely would end your career quick.


**I'm trying to hit and not be hit. I was being stupid before. Like, five or four years ago I would go toe-to-toe and start sparring with heavyweights and try to beat each other up in sparring.**

**Do you have any crazy sparring stories?**

Mark Hunt, he was trying to knock me out one day. He couldn't. That was the first time that we did [sparring]. Might

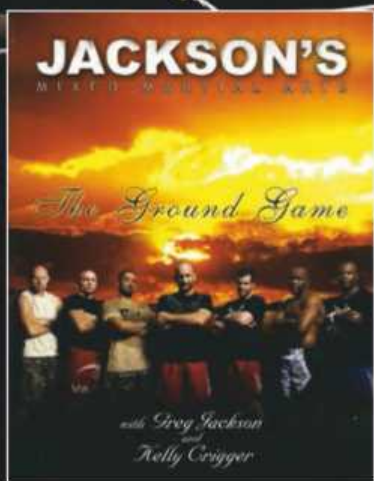
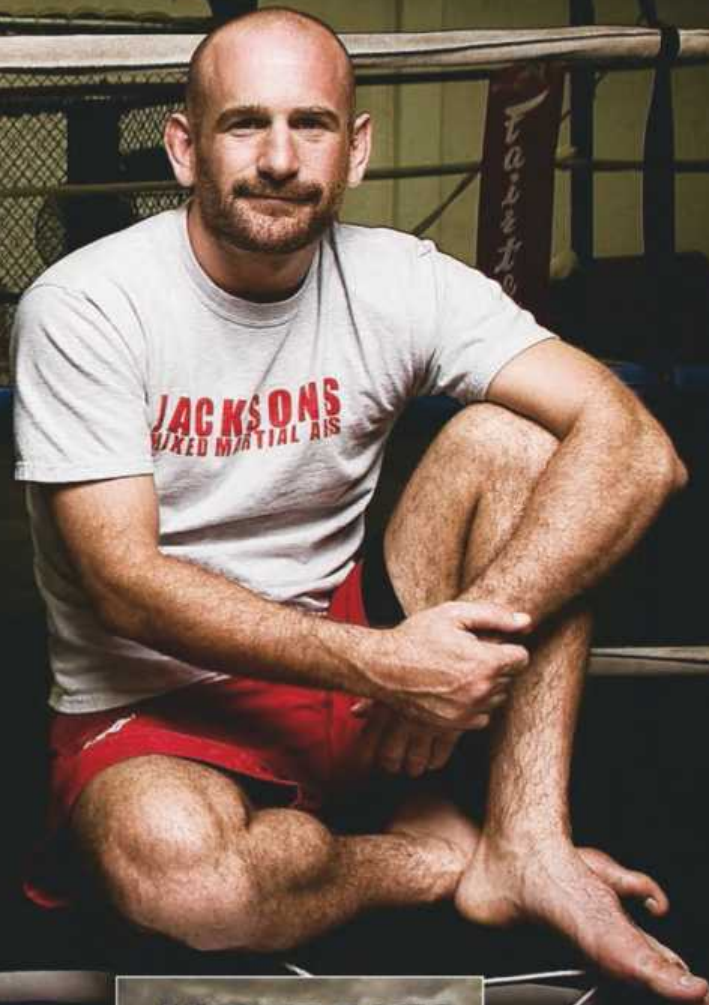
Mo. I don't know if you know him. Freaking guy is huge. He's about 330 pounds, maybe 350. He won the Taiwan championships. Huge. And I remember that he just wanted to knock me out and all of a sudden I came out with a jab and I dropped him. But he was kinda like he wanted to hurt me. I remember with Josh Barnett, we were sparring for about an hour and something, and then he kind of like gave up. You know, stories like that. But I'm just lucky that I'm still going, because after all this hard sparring stuff, you know, I'm lucky to stay in the game.

**Are you open fighting the winner or loser of Tyrone Woodley vs. Johnny Hendricks when you return?**

Yeah, I'm open. Why not in Australia? Come on. You have to get me on in Australia. I beg you. I beg you to get me on in Australia. 

From the most accomplished  
and celebrated mixed martial  
arts coach in the world,

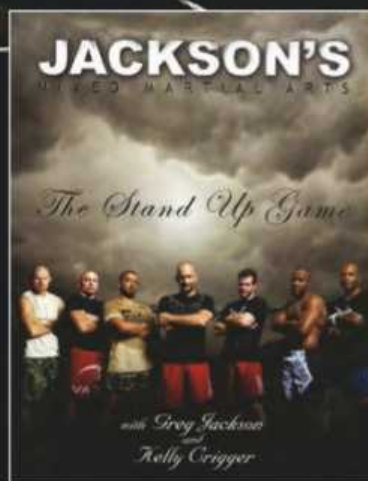
## Greg Jackson



### The Ground Game

With Greg Jackson & Kelly Crigger

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# DAMIEN BROWN

Walking into Flight Centre in Taigum wasn't going to be easy. His heart was racing far more than what it would be if he were to be stepping into the cage right at that moment. Damien Brown was about to take the biggest risk of his life – it was just one plane ticket.



BRETT ZIMMER



Every time the booking confirmation was made, it was like he was already backed up against the cage. Flight Centre Taigum had just put in a 10-8 round. And the real fight hadn't even begun.

It's not uncommon for a mixed martial arts fighter to have to pretty well pay their way into the big-time. With such a large pool of fighters in Australia alone, it can be hard enough for them to get a fight on home soil, let alone on the world stage. As far as his win-loss record goes, it may be construed that his risk of paying his own way to fight in Europe didn't exactly pay off. For Brown, it was always about the experience, and it was always about what he got out of the fights themselves, even if it did mean adding a whole new type of pressure to his fights well before his training camp had even begun.

"That was daunting," Brown said. "When I booked the tickets it made me nervous automatically. I don't normally get nervous before a fight, I just go in and do what I've gotta do. As soon as I walked out of Flight Centre after booking those tickets, I knew I had something to lose. I paid my own way to fight over in Europe. That's the way that most fighters have to do it and that adds stress to your preparation because you don't wanna get injured because you've got your flights coming out of your own pocket. You get injured and you lose money in a pretty big way. I pretty much made no money to fight over there, I just wanted the competition and that's what I got.

"Things could have been different. I could have prepared for those fights a lot different without the added stress, but it is what it is. If you're gonna fly 35 hours to fight someone in their backyard, you've gotta make sure you finish them. I took a risk and it didn't really pay off, but I'm a better fighter for it."

Each time that Brown competed under the Cage Warriors banner, he put on a show to remember. His fight against Paul Redmond was one that had fans raving all over the world. Each time he fought, he saw the judges' scorecards, and each time the Europe-based fighters would come out with the win. It was a tough situation to be in, and even though he didn't leave those fights with wins on his record, for Brown it wasn't all for nothing.

"We could sit here all day and say that I won those fights," Brown said. "It depends who you talk to. Everyone believes that I won two out of three of them — I feel that I won all three; if anything I only lost the one in Dublin and only just in the last minute of the fight. They were three close decisions against guys that are now in the UFC. Most of my losses in my career have been against guys who fight in the UFC now or fight in the bigger promotions. It just goes to show that

the competition overseas is really just a whole different level."

Brown's stint in Europe saw him lose three fights in a row. The end of 2013 through to the end of 2014 saw him embark on a low point in his career going on a four-fight skid. It was a tough time for the 30-year-old and it was going to take more than just a moment of self-reflection for him to get back to his winning ways.

"I'm pretty open with the fact that I went and saw a mental performance



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coach," Brown said. "I went and saw Shaun O'Gorman of Focus WOD and his slogan is 'mental toughness is the key'. He just changed the way that I thought. When I went into my next fight — the XFC title fight that I ended up winning in February — it was as if I was coming off wins going into that fight. Even though I was coming off four straight losses, in my mind it was as if I was going in there with a win streak — it felt amazing."

With his four straight losses behind him, it came time for Brown to regroup. Whenever a fighter has a few fights behind them, it can become increasingly hard for them to secure an opponent. For Brown his four setbacks in a row meant that there was new interest amongs fighters all over the country in squaring off against him; however, that didn't exactly last.

"When I came back to fighting in Australia, there were guys lining up to fight me," Brown said. "There were guys with two, three and six fights that were saying, 'I wanna fight Damien Brown.' These guys were probably thinking to themselves, 'This guy is coming off four losses, it's the perfect time for me to fight him because he's been around for a while and it'll be a good win for me.' Everybody was calling me out and



then I won on XFC and then I got my last win at BRACE and now nobody wants to fight me."

The first fight back for 2015 saw renewed energy for Brown. XFC's featherweight champion Shane Young stepped up to fight at lightweight when both men were without opponents for XFC 23 on 28 February in Brisbane. The promotion's lightweight title was on the line and Brown seized the moment.

"I fought through a broken hand and I got my first belt after 19 pro fights," Brown said. "I had a rough 18 months and I thought about walking away from the sport, competition-wise, and just training as a martial artist for the rest of my life. After seeing Shaun, he just changed my way of thinking and regenerated the passion. I just had a different feeling going into 2015 even without a fight organised, I just felt like things were gonna happen. I have absolutely zero doubt in my mind that I'm going to win my next fight and I think that by the end of 2015 I'll be on a four-fight win streak and undefeated in 2015 with two Australian titles."

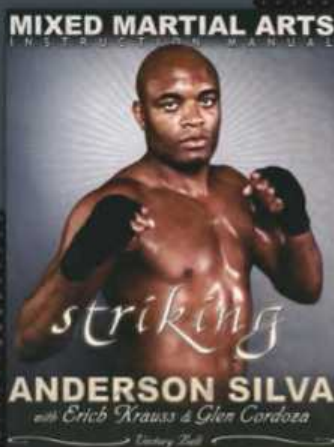
For the first time in over four years Brown has found himself fighting multiple fights in a row on home soil. While the attention that he has gotten from fighting internationally has helped him with many opportunities throughout his career, for Brown there



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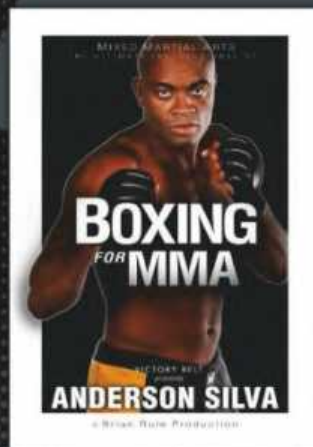


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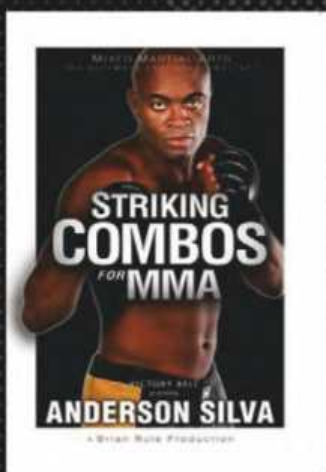
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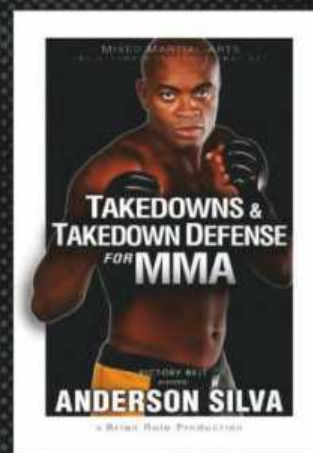
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is also nothing like making his mark on the local circuit.

"I've fought the 'who's who' of Australian MMA; I don't dodge fights with anyone," Brown said. "I've fought guys on two weeks' notice, I've fought guys on 12 weeks' notice, I've said yes to guys who have said no. I'll fight anyone in Australia at lightweight who is not one of my training partners. My record in Australia is 11-3 and any time that I fight someone in Australia, that's how I go into the fight. I don't see myself as 12-8. Most of my losses have come from fighting overseas and fighting tough, tough guys, so whenever I am fighting in Australia, I know that I have what it takes to get the win."

With there being a very real possibility that Brown will finish the year off with a winning streak, there is just one goal that he has in his mind for the new year. Brown has fought some of the best fighters in the world

and while that may also show on his record, he still wants that chance to test himself against more of the sport's elite competitors.

"My goal has always been to fight for the UFC," Brown said. "Cage Warriors was a fantastic promotion to fight for, they looked after their fighters, they treated them like family and I'd love to fight for them again, but I will never fly myself anywhere to fight again. I've learnt my lesson from that and that added stress just isn't worth the exposure. As soon as you back off from training because you have that fear of losing something, you just can't be 100 per cent ready for the fight."

Inside the BRACE cage on 21 November Brown will meet Ben Games, a fighter who has seen the cage far less than Brown. It's one of those fights that he knows he can't look past. And he does know one thing for certain — the fans in Canberra, and the ones tuning in

from all around the world, are going to be in for some typical 'Beatdown' fun.

"He won his right to fight for the belt and he's undefeated at the moment," Brown said. "From what I've seen I don't think he really has more than one round of gas in him and I've definitely got the experience. I'm looking forward to being able to fight in Canberra I've never fought there and having the fight aired on Fight Pass is going to give even more fans a look at what I can do in there."

"I don't have boring fights; I've never been in a boring fight in my life. When I fought in Sydney I sold tickets to people from all over the country to come and watch me and this is going to be the same. Canberra is close to home — even though I live up in Brisbane, Albury is my hometown and I know there are gonna be a lot of people going to watch me fight for a belt and watch me win." 📌

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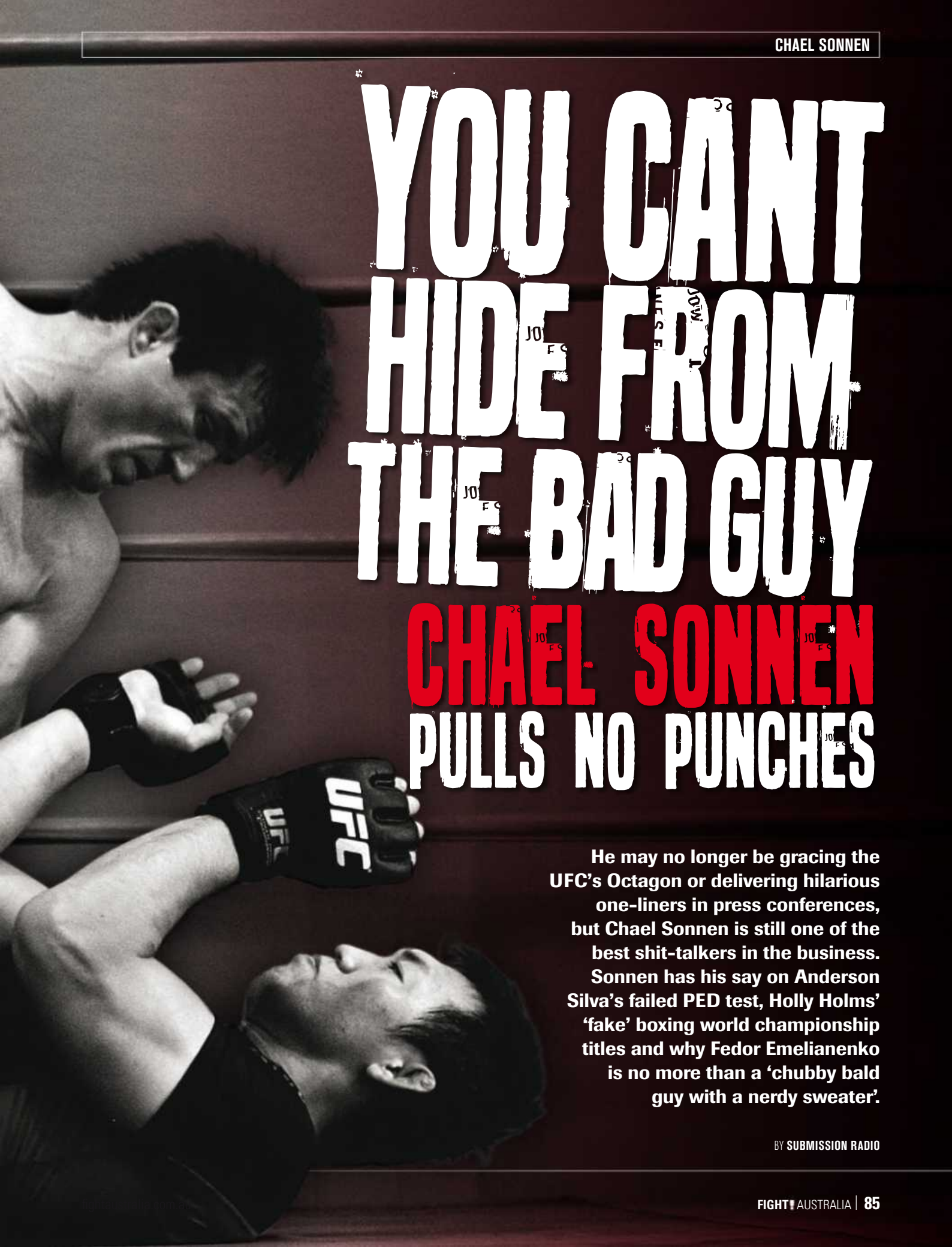
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CHAE L SONNEN





# YOU CANT HIDE FROM THE BAD GUY

## CHAEI SONNEN

### PULLS NO PUNCHES

He may no longer be gracing the UFC's Octagon or delivering hilarious one-liners in press conferences, but Chael Sonnen is still one of the best shit-talkers in the business. Sonnen has his say on Anderson Silva's failed PED test, Holly Holms' 'fake' boxing world championship titles and why Fedor Emelianenko is no more than a 'chubby bald guy with a nerdy sweater'.

BY SUBMISSION RADIO





**What are your thoughts on the way Anderson Silva's defence handled his NSAC PED hearing?**

Gentleman, the cover-up is always worse than the crime. What Anderson Silva did — this is my mortal enemy. I hate this guy, okay? — I still give him a full pass. I cannot look at what he did as an objective person, looking at his leg and go, "Listen, your leg snapped in two pieces, okay? You owed it to yourself, you owed it to your family to heal that leg, whether you had to go to the free market or the black market, it doesn't make any difference to me. I'm really impressed that you found something to heal your leg."

**AND EVERYBODY THAT ENDS UP IN THE HOT SEAT — AND I'VE BEEN IN THAT SEAT. I MEAN, I'M TELLING YOU GUYS THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOMEBODY THAT GOT IN THE SAME JAM — YOUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE IS TO EXPLAIN HOW IT GOT IN YOUR SYSTEM.**

Now, he could have then been a good guy about it, he could have come out and said, "yeah, as a matter of fact, here's how I did it. So anybody else in my spot, let me walk you through what I did." That would have been the cool thing to do. But you know, he got

scared about it. And those guys don't understand those tests. They're pass or fail. And everybody that ends up in the hot seat — and I've been in that seat. I mean, I'm telling you guys, the psychology of somebody that got in the same jam — your first line of defence is to explain how it got in your system.

Well how it got there doesn't make a damn bit of difference. It doesn't make any difference how it got there. It was either there or it wasn't, it's pass or fail. And the commission slapped him on the wrist, but the way he went about it, historically is what would get the book thrown at you. It's the guys that dig in, it's the guys that lie about it that always get the worst treatment. The guys that come forward and say, "Listen you got me. Here's what happened." Those are the guys that kind of get the Anderson treatment. So he had the best of both worlds there. He had a great, great fairytale or a story and he didn't get punished for it. So good for him.

**What are your thoughts on Holly Holm and her boxing world champion accolades?**

It's the only thing that's holding her back.



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You need the mandate of a few people. You need the mandate of the bosses, the guys on the second floor at the UFC, you need the mandate of the fans, but you also need the support of the people in the locker-room. You know, the fellow fighters kind of have to step aside for somebody to be the number one contender and go, "Okay, yeah, you're the right person."

Holly is gaining some fan support, and as far as the locker-room goes, we can't get behind her because she's not telling the truth. There is no validity that I'm willing to sign off on — and I'm happy for someone to come in and disagree with me, tell me where I'm wrong. But there is no validity to any of her world championships, let alone some ridiculous claim of being a 17-time world champion. I mean, guys, I can go open the door to my garage right now, invite all comers and then put a belt around whoever wins and call it the 'world championship'. And I mean that kind of stuff happens all the time. You see it in arm wrestling. There's a world championship for some game called 'cornholing', which is like some Midwest version of horseshoes. There's world championships for thumb wrestling, and there's no validity to this stuff. There's no validity to her being a 17-time world champion, and I don't believe as an analyst that there's any validity to any — zero — of her championships.

I don't know one tournament that she ever entered where the entire planet

was welcome to enter, and they whittled it down with a competitive architecture known as a bracket, and one person was left standing. I don't know of it. And I've been making this claim for a while, wanting somebody to disagree with me, wanting Holly to disagree with me or one of her coaches to come out and go, 'Chael, you don't know what you're talking about.' It's never happened. She's got the thumb-wrestling world championship from some dude's garage. That's just the reality. I do think she's a skilled fighter, I think she's a good boxer. I don't know if that matters.

**BOXING IS A DYING BREED, MAN. PEOPLE ASK ME THIS ABOUT FLOYD MAYWEATHER ALL THE TIME. IS HE THE GREATEST BOXER EVER?**

I'm 38 years old, I've never met a female boxer. Not one. I've travelled the world, I've seen damn near every continent in every country, I've been in every state in America, I've never reached across a table and shaken hands with a woman that turned out was a boxer. So are you the best boxer in the world for females? Maybe? Does that

mean you beat about three people? Yeah, it does. And I'm not discrediting her, I'm discrediting boxing.

Boxing is a dying breed, man. People ask me this about Floyd Mayweather all the time. Is he the greatest boxer ever? He's certainly the best of this time, and he's certainly a fantastic athlete and he should get a lot more credit than he does, but nobody boxes, guys. The same way I said I've never met a girl that boxes. I was 28 years old when I met my first boxer. Clayton Hires was the first man I've ever met who had been in the ring and competed in boxing; not one of these liars that goes down to the gym and jumps rope for three minutes and then goes and gets some water. I'm talking about a guy that gets in the ring on a Saturday night and boxes another man. I was 28 years old when I met my first one of those. The sport doesn't exist. So who cares if you're the best at it.

**There was speculation Fedor would sign with the UFC, which didn't eventuate. How do you think he would have fared against the elite heavyweights in the UFC?**

No, Fedor is terrible. And Fedor is a very nice guy. I had the pleasure to meet him twice. The first time, I was in line with him at a Starbucks in a hotel in Los Angeles, and he just blended in. He was just a chubby bald guy, with a nerdy sweater, waiting for his latte like



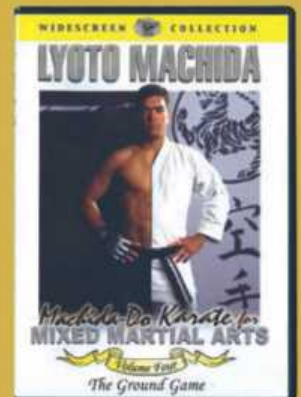
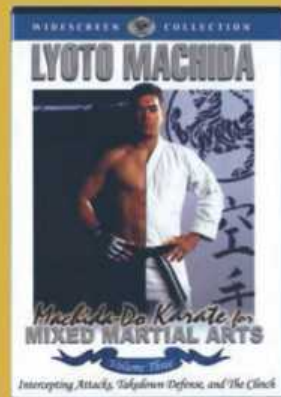
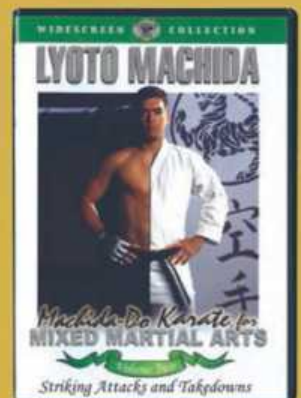
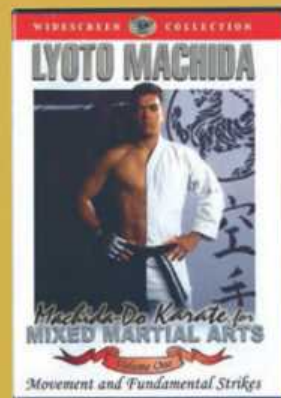
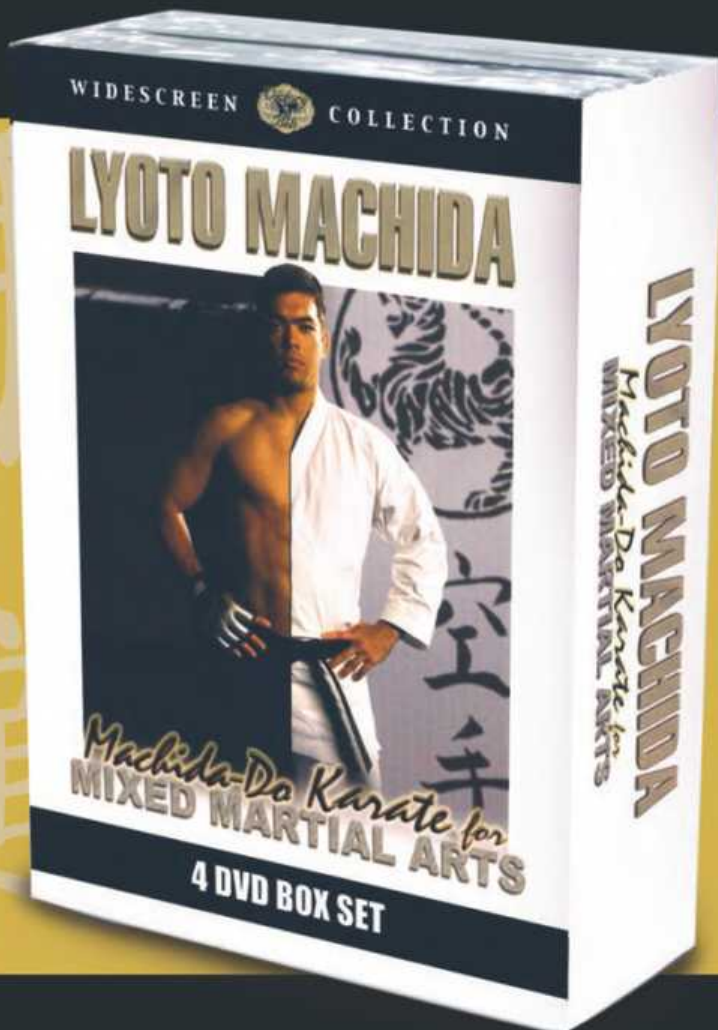
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everybody else. And I thought, what a nice guy.

The reality on Fedor is, if you're not fighting in a commissioned fight, you're not fighting in a real fight. It has to be a sanctioned commission fight. This comes right back to what we were talking about with Holly and her quadrillion boxing championships. If there's no sanctioning and there's no credibility and architecture, it doesn't count. So everything he did in Japan with a referee wearing an earpiece gets thrown out.

You gotta come to the States, where there's an official weigh-in, where there's a regulatory body, and where there's clearer defined rules, with clearer defined judging. He did that. He did that six times and he went 3-3. That's not exactly an impressive record for a guy that we all keep having to hear is 'the best of all time'. Now God bless him, I love a guy that can come back, but I can tell you first hand, you don't get better not doing something.

Fedor got destroyed by guys who are now getting destroyed. Fedor got destroyed by Bigfoot Silva, who by my last count has fought — I believe Frank Mir knocked him out in 18 seconds, I suppose I'd have to re-watch that — but the point is that it's ridiculous. I think it will sell once. I know that I'll

tune in, I know that the UFC would have greatly overpaid for him, and good for Fedor, man. I think he did everything right, and he is a nice guy. You know, this isn't my goal to come out and bash a guy, but look, if a guy's terrible, a guy's terrible. He's 3-3 in the States, that means he's 3-3.

### **What about with the fighters no longer on TRT? How would he fair without facing heavyweights using TRT?**

Yeah, and I'll let you be the first to actually get your vernacular right; there's no such thing as TRT. It's just T. It is just testosterone. You'll never go buy a bottle of something that says TRT on it, but you can get the first letter, you get the T down. So I can tell you, and again, you're talking to a guy that used it. So I mean, let me tell you first hand, it makes a difference, it helps, it is a performance enhancer. If I thought it was going to de-hance me, I never would have taken it. So yes, that matters, but not as much as a lot of people think.


And the field was pretty level in my experience with the testosterone era. I was one of the few guys that came out and did it right, publicity said I was on it, and went and got the exemptions.

When I did that, I had no idea there was going to be a backlash. I had no idea that people were going to say, "Man, that's a loophole." or anything else I dealt with. And when that happened, everybody else just said, "You know what? I'm gonna do this too but I'm not going to disclose it. I'm not going to do what Chael did and make myself subject to public ridicule." And when that happened, that's when guys started getting in trouble. So the guys you're talking about that were taking the testosterone and admitted it, the only difference between them and their opponents, for the most part, is they admitted it.

### **What about your competitive future? Do you have any plans in the works?**

I have a match coming up at the very end of October, might even be November 1st, I have to look — his name is Josh Barnett.

I'll even give you gentleman a prediction — Sonnen wins. I'm going to take his fat ass down and he will never get up. And let him know I said that.

I'm going to take Josh down and then I'm going to whisper in his ear "Welcome to the next 20 minutes of your life." 

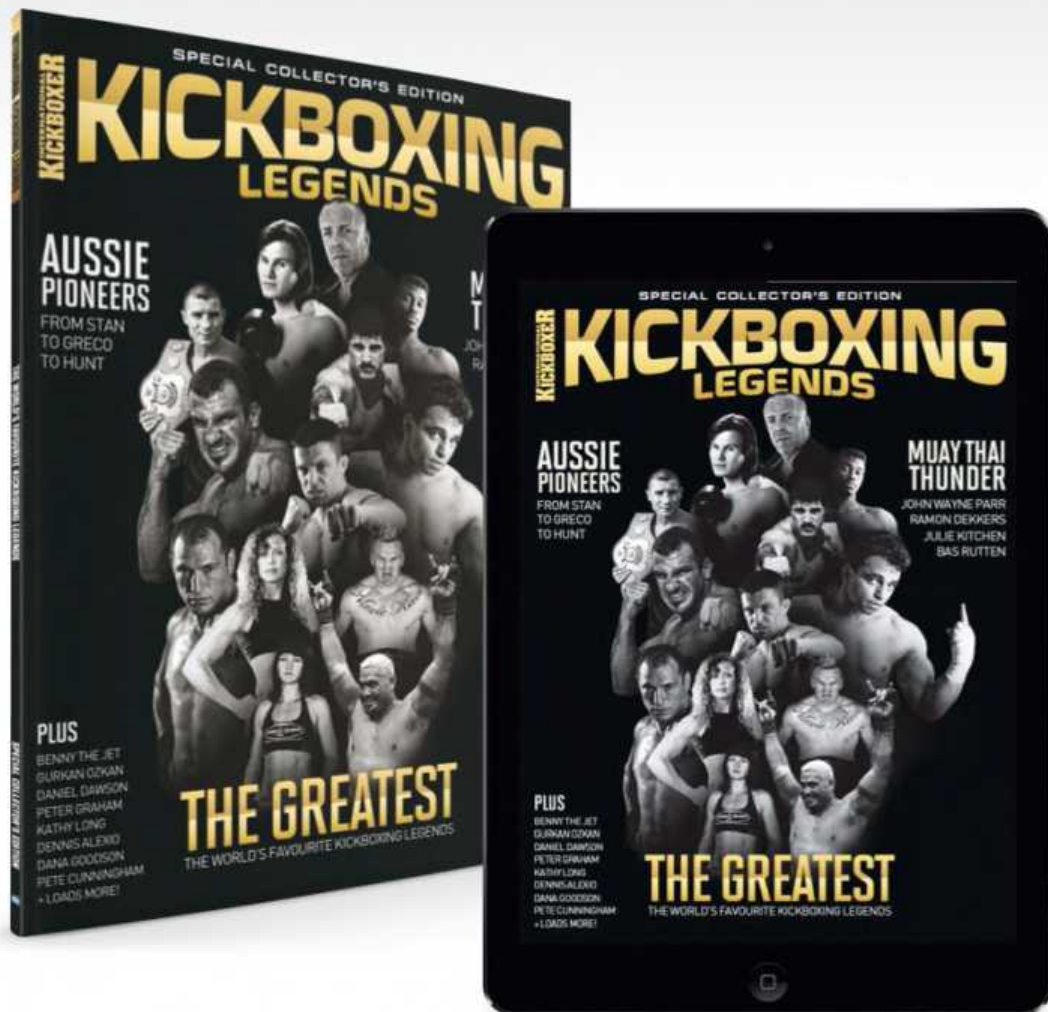


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# More than Sports

**Melbourne media keeps its head stuck squarely in the sand.**

BY JARROD BOYLE

I am currently travelling in Europe, and news reached me that Australia has had a sudden change of prime minister. Eager to share in the good news, I googled *The Age* newspaper online. In addition to reports on the change of leadership, I discovered there was an article about the press conference for UFC 193, due to be held in Melbourne on 15 November.

I was as interested to read the article as I was in who had written it. A good friend of mine – who is an outstanding writer and former AFL player – works as a sports columnist for *The Age*. He has written about MMA in the past and I was curious to see if it was his work.

Instead, the article was written by Greg Baum, credited as the paper's senior sports columnist. I thought it might have been something of a turn-around; *The Age* has long been unsympathetic to MMA. It seems, along with the rest of the uneducated populace, to confuse mixed martial arts with what is essentially a brand-name, UFC.

Baum didn't like it, which is nothing surprising.

As a former fighter who began in traditional martial arts and moved into kickboxing, I'm not entirely comfortable with the kinds of permissible strikes and, accordingly, the injuries inflicted in MMA. Even more troubling is the lack of sportsmanship and the kind of aggression that is present outside of the cage between combatants, especially in the UFC.

Colleagues were encouraging me to watch MMA many years before the rise of the modern UFC. I felt that Senator John McCain, who described it as 'human cockfighting', had hit the nail on the head, and I was not interested.

I then became involved with MMA fighters through the course of my training, most notably when I trained in Holland with the now UFC-contracted heavyweight Alistair Overeem. Interacting with him – and other mixed martial artists – on a technical level forced me to re-evaluate my opinion.

Baum also took umbrage with the fact that headliner Ronda Rousey was

declared the world's most dominant sportswoman in a US poll, ahead of Serena Williams.

Serena Williams is far more experienced than Ronda Rousey in terms of presenting herself to the public through the kaleidoscope of the media; accordingly, Rousey is quite coarse in many of the things she says.



Good sportsmanship is an essential feature of both tennis and Williams' professional comportment, but Rousey is on a mighty trajectory and no doubt learning as she goes. Public scrutiny is the largest hurdle that causes professional athletes to stumble and fall.

Rousey is articulate and smiles often; she's going to get there. She is headlining what is traditionally an entirely male-

dominated sport. Not even Laila Ali could draw the kind of attention Rousey has. She may well be redefining sport for a new era.

The most striking feature of Baum's article, however, is his cursory sentence to explain UFC (and presumably MMA) to his readers:


"The aesthetic of a UFC bout is a cross between the bottom of an AFL pack, mating centipedes and the business end of a porno."

My mother used to say that it was best not to dignify foolish comments by supplying a response, but the basic invalidity of both Baum's comments and point of view is nestled here.

An AFL pack is more than two people. Centipedes don't have arms – or elbows for that matter – and lastly comes the reference to porn. Which raises the question: what sort of porn is Baum watching?

I'm still not entirely comfortable with MMA, even after watching a considerable amount of it and training with some of its most outstanding proponents, even recently travelling to Poland with Australia's best heavyweight, Peter Graham, to assist with his prep, watch him fight and finally write about the experience for *Fight! magazine*.

However, I understand that the public fascination with the sport is growing, along with the size of its audience. It is very clearly a sport according to the same properties that define tennis and AFL. All of them require immense strength, fitness, technique and fortitude. If anything, MMA transcends the others because, as Ernest Hemingway said, "Boxing and bullfighting are more than sports. They are elevated to the status of ritual because of the blood that is in them."

We're still not certain what MMA says about us as a culture, or what its effect will be. However, the discussion requires an educated perspective and a willingness to engage. Culturally, you might find mixed martial arts offensive, grotesque and distasteful. However, like boxing and bullfighting, you cannot deny it. 

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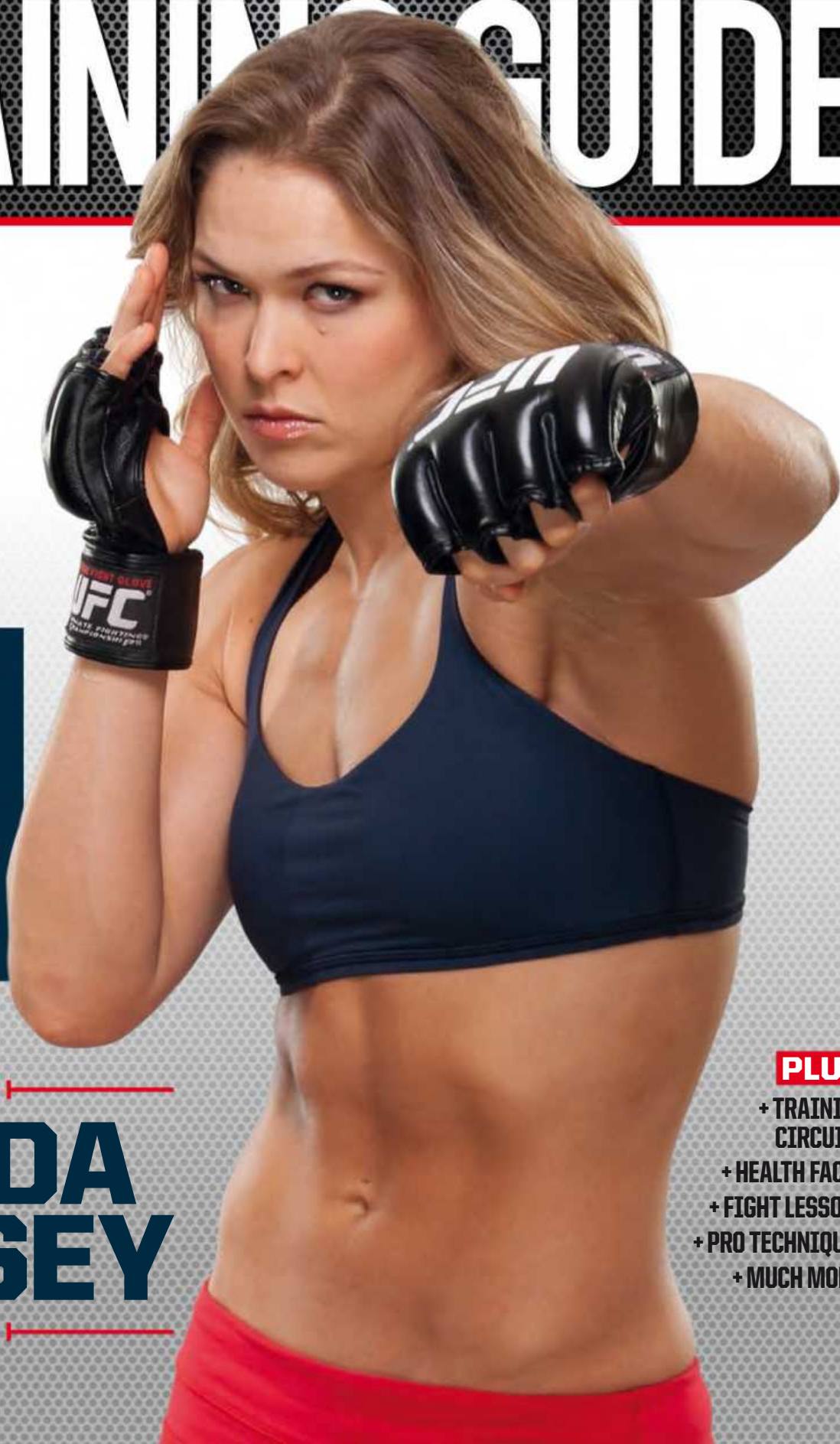
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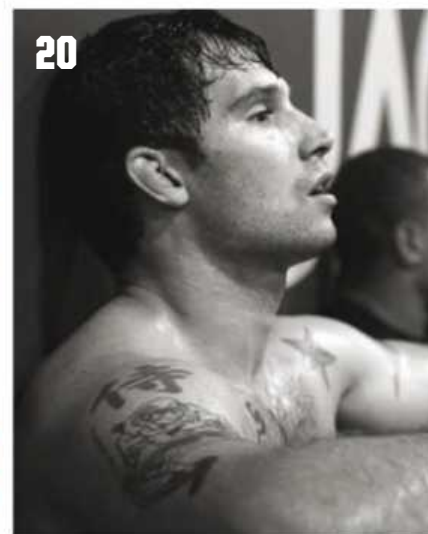
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# Protein Power

Bars and shakes are great in a pinch, but there's plenty to choose from when it comes to natural sources of quality protein.

BY DAWN REPPUCCI, RD/LD

**P**rotein aids in the building, repair and maintenance of lean muscle tissue. Along with carbohydrates and fat, protein is one of the three principal macronutrients. These nutrients provide calories (energy) and are needed by the body in large quantities (compared to micronutrients like vitamins and minerals needed in smaller amounts).

The minimal daily requirement for the average person (not active) is 0.79 grams (g) of protein per kilogram (kg) of body weight. Athletes, however, need more protein than the average couch potato, so those involved in endurance-based sports need approximately 1.21 to 1.41 g/kg daily. Those involved in strength-based activities will require approximately 1.21 to 1.70 g/kg. Since fighters train in both of these realms, meeting somewhere in the middle, around 1.5 g/kg body weight, is a good template. If you do the math, a 175-pound fighter with a well-rounded training schedule will require approximately 119 grams of protein daily. While that sounds like a lot, when you break it down over three meals and a couple of snacks, it's not excessive when you have these natural sources to choose from.

## BEEF

**TIP:** Organic, grass-fed beef has higher levels of anti-inflammatory omega-3 fats, metabolic-boosting CLA (conjugated linoleic acid), and antioxidants beta-carotene and vitamin E (compared to conventionally fed/raised beef).

### ► 85g Beef (93 per cent lean ground)

Protein: 21 g  
Calories: 145  
Fat: 6.8 g

## EGGS

**TIP:** Buy organic eggs to ensure that the chickens were raised in a cage-free environment on organic feed and were not given antibiotics or hormones.

### ► 1 Large Egg

Protein: 6 g  
Calories: 70  
Fat: 5 g

## SALMON

**TIP:** Go wild (versus farm-raised) when it comes to this fish that is rich in omega-3 fatty acid, as farm-raised may contain up to 10 times more toxins, including PCBs and mercury.

### ► 100g Wild Salmon

Protein: 29 g  
Calories: 206  
Fat: 6.8 g

## BISON

**TIP:** Like grass-fed beef, grass-fed bison will be higher in omega-3 fatty acids, CLA and antioxidants, as well as protein, B vitamins, iron and selenium.

### ► 85g Grass-Fed Ground Bison

Protein: 21 g  
Calories: 150  
Fat: 7.3 g

## TURKEY

**TIP:** Ground turkey is a great lean protein source that easily lends itself to everyday entrees such as burgers, chili and meatloaf.

### ► 100g Turkey Breast

Protein: 28 g  
Calories: 121  
Fat: 1 g

## CHICKEN

**TIP:** When you're looking for the leanest of the lean, skinless breasts are the way to go. However, skinless thighs are usually quite a bit cheaper and not that much higher on the calorie scale, so when pennies need to be pinched, thighs are also a good choice.

### ► 100g Chicken Breast

Protein: 35 g  
Calories: 170  
Fat: 3 g

### ► 100g Chicken Thigh

Protein: 32 g  
Calories: 200  
Fat: 8 g

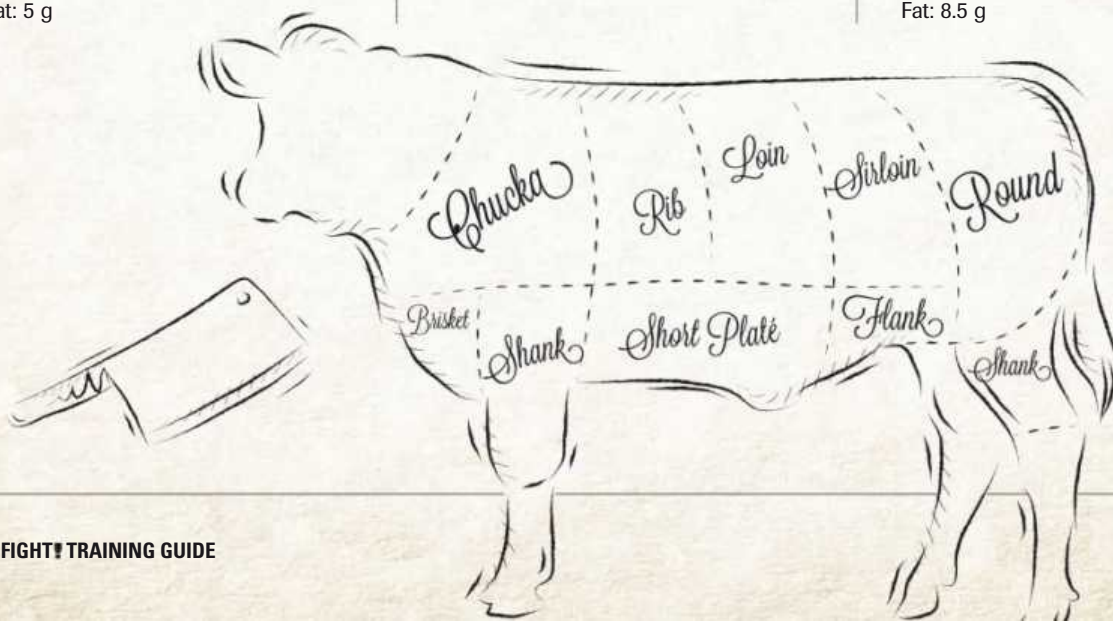
## TEMPEH

(COOKED/FERMENTED SOY)

**TIP:** Tempeh is much healthier than tofu due to the fermentation process that negates the effects regular soy can have on thyroid and hormone balance.

### ► 100g Organic Tempeh

Protein: 20 g  
Calories: 220  
Fat: 8.5 g





# Sugar in the tank

If you're hitting the gym hard, make sure you strike the sugar balance.

**S**ugar gets a lot of press these days. Headlines about its negative effects on general health, as well as its possible link to chronic disease, can be found everywhere. While we should all take heed of the warnings about highly processed sugars, athletes do have a vital need for it before, during and after long training sessions.

Your average Joe should be cognisant of the fact that excess sugar consumption can have serious negative side effects. As an athlete, you should too, especially during hiatuses in training. There are also particular forms of sugar, such as artificial sweeteners and high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), that no one needs to be consuming, regardless of your physical condition.

So what is sugar exactly? We see it in little packets at the coffee shop, it's in most traditional baked goods and desserts, but what are the main types?

## 1 Monosaccharides

**Also known as simple sugars, monosaccharides include glucose, fructose and galactose. All carbohydrates consumed in the diet are broken down into monosaccharides to be absorbed by the small intestine.**

### GLUCOSE

- Most carbohydrates are converted to glucose during digestion.
- Travels via the bloodstream to all tissues in your body and will be readily converted to energy.
- Glucose not used immediately will be stored in the liver and muscles as glycogen (to be accessed during exercise for energy).
- When your blood sugar is drawn at the doctor's office, it's measuring blood glucose.
- It can sometimes be listed as dextrose on food labels.

### FRUCTOSE

- Naturally occurring sugar in fruits, vegetables and honey.
- Component of table sugar (sucrose) along with glucose.
- Can be derived from sugarcane, sugar beets and corn.

- Converted into glucose by the liver prior to being used as fuel.
- Plays a vital role in sports nutrition, albeit lesser discussed as much media dialogue is associated with its over-consumption by the general population and links to obesity and other chronic diseases.

### GALACTOSE

- Component of milk sugar (lactose) along with glucose.
- Less sweet than glucose or fructose.
- Component of antigens found on red blood cells that establish blood types.

## 2 Disaccharides

**When monosaccharide molecules join together, they form disaccharides, including sucrose, maltose and lactose.**

### SUCROSE

- Equal parts glucose and fructose.
- Commonly known as table sugar.
- Once consumed, it's split into glucose and fructose via sucrose (enzyme).
- Found in the stems of sugarcane and roots of sugar beets.

- Major sweetening element in confections and desserts.
- Has been replaced by high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) in many areas of the food industry, especially soft drinks and junk foods. HFCS is typically 55 per cent fructose and 45 per cent glucose. It's made by milling corn into corn starch, turning that corn starch into corn syrup (mostly glucose), and then turning some of that glucose into fructose (through the use of enzymes).

### MALTOSE

- Formed from two units of glucose during digestion of starch via the enzyme amylase.
- Less sweet than glucose, fructose, or sucrose.
- Also known as malt sugar.

### LACTOSE

- Naturally occurring milk sugar.
- Made up of glucose and galactose.
- Broken down via the enzyme lactase.
- Those with lactose intolerance have insufficient levels of lactase.

### PEAK PERFORMANCE

When it comes to lazy days on the sofa, sugar should be considered your foe. When it comes to energy and exercise, your body will make friends with the sweet stuff, specifically certain members of the monosaccharide clan. With galactose being poorly oxidised for energy during activity, you're left with glucose and fructose to provide fuel to your working muscles.

To get from the gut to the bloodstream, you'll need protein transporters to deliver sugars to needed tissues. Glucose and fructose use different transporters, allowing for greater carbohydrate uptake when consumed together (using the same transporter would cause it to become oversaturated, negatively affecting how much and how fast the sugars can be absorbed and utilised as energy).

A combined glucose- and fructose-based sports drink or gel formulation (optimal ratio 2:1) will have a more positive effect on performance than just glucose or fructose alone. This preferred ratio has also been shown to increase gastric emptying (rate at which contents leave the stomach), decrease GI distress, spare stored glycogen, and decrease perceived exertion (all positives).



# Resolution Solution

New Year's resolutions need to be more definitive than just "eating right" or "exercising regularly". To help navigate your path of optimal health and wellness throughout the year, check out these 10 health bites that will help get you on track in 2016.

BY DAWN REPPUCCI, RD/LDR



## 1. AU NATUREL

Keep your health status in check by opting for the non-GMO (genetically modified organism) label on your edibles. Genetically modified crops may be more resistant to herbicides, making them great for big business, but respected groups (such as the American Academy of Environmental Medicine) have warned of the grave potential dangers associated with the consumption of these foods, including loss of immune, liver and fertility function. Go completely organic to avoid GMOs, as they are not allowed in organic goods. If you can't go completely organic due to expense or availability, try buying organic when it comes to the most commonly genetically engineered foods, such as corn, soy, canola (rapeseed) and squash.

## 2. SEA THE WEED

If you're a regular crunchy/salty snack monger, ditch the chips and try a light, crispy seaweed snack. With some of the best brands sporting just three ingredients — seaweed, olive oil and sea salt — they're about as clean as you're going to get in the way of packaged snacks. You're also getting vitamins A, B6, and C, fibre and iodine (great for thyroid support) with very few calories.



## 3. BE A JERKY

If seaweed is not your thing and you need more of a protein punch, jerky may be your answer. Due to the popularity of high protein, Paleo-style diet plans, there are all kinds of jerky on the market these days. Search out brands that offer organic meat, moderate sodium content, and gluten-free soy sauce (if needed).



## 4. SPROUT UP

Watch out kale, brussels sprouts are becoming the new darling of the health food world. Your palate has most likely matured from when you were seven years old and your parents forced you to eat brussels sprouts before leaving the dinner table. Give them a try again if for no other reason but to reap their huge list of health benefits. This cruciferous veggie has been shown to boast cancer protection, anti-inflammatory and detox support, and also provide a nice helping of vitamins A and C, potassium, folate, iron and fibre.



## 5. FLAVOUR SAVOR

Reach for clean, low-glycemic sweeteners in moderation when needed in place of sugar. If you've tried Stevia and it's just not working for you, train your taste buds to enjoy the flavour of whatever food or beverage you're consuming (sans sugar). Herbal teas come naturally flavoured and don't need to be sweetened, while plain oatmeal or yoghurt both pair tastily with ground cinnamon and a few berries. If necessary, check out coconut nectar and Coconut Crystals for a low glycemic index natural pinch of sweetness.



## 6. CHICKEN OUT

You will get sick of eating healthfully if you try living off only grilled chicken and broccoli. That can get boring... and fast. To prevent from breaking down and ordering a pizza, keep the lean meats on shuffle and include some less common but highly enjoyable protein sources, such as ground bison, lamb and tempeh (fermented soy). Non-fermented soy (tofu and soy milk) can negatively affect thyroid and hormone balance, but fermented soy (tempeh and miso) can be a great protein source (as long as it's organic).



## 7. GO GO GADGET

The correct tools for any job will always save you time and money (and sometimes your sanity) while also allowing you to cook and live healthier. This doesn't mean you have to buy the \$500 blender or the massive retro-stand mixer. Keep it simple with items like a quality garlic press, an oil mister, a set of green pans, upgraded knives, or an avocado saver.



## 8. GUT CHECK


When you talk about immune function, you're also talking about gut health, as approximately 80 per cent of your immune function is based in your gut. The good, the bad and the ugly are all housed in your GI tract, with about 500 different species of bacteria equating to an actual bacteria count in the trillions. You'll never completely eradicate all the bad guys, but it's the balance that's important, and your good bacteria should always be up to snuff if optimal health is your goal. Probiotics (good bacteria) can be found in most health food stores in capsule and powder forms, as well as naturally in foods such as yoghurt, kefir, cultured cottage cheese, miso paste, kombucha and kimchi.

## 9. CLEAN SWEEP

Inflammation is your body's natural protection and healing response to injury or outside irritants. If you whack your thumb with a hammer during a botched home improvement stint, the inflammation will most likely be brief and you should mend quickly. But when insults to your body become chronic, so does inflammation, and the once helpful process can wreak havoc. The link between chronic systemic inflammation and chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, allergies and cancer is becoming more evident. Insults can be as simple as overconsumption of pesticide-laden or overly processed/hybridised foods, high sugar intake leading to excessive abdominal fat and high insulin levels, low-grade/lingering infections, or a bevy of chemicals and toxins we're exposed to regularly. Do yourself a favour by living an anti-inflammatory lifestyle involving a clean diet of whole foods and plenty of pure water, regular exercise to maintain a healthy body weight, limited alcohol consumption and no smoking. Anti-inflammatory supplements like fish oils, quercetin, bromelain, resveratrol, curcumin and ginger will give you an added boost.



## 10. HIT THE SACK

Sleep is often an overlooked part of your training routine. You'd be sorely mistaken to downplay its importance. You may notice many differences in your body when you're sleep deprived, none of which are positive, including reduced reflexes, trouble concentrating and decreased aerobic endurance. Aiming for seven to nine hours per night is a good goal, although everyone will differ when it comes to optimal range. 







# Dr Q&A

Doctor Peter Lewis takes the time to answer some of the common fighter questions we get asked here at *Fight! Australia* magazine.



**A lot of new guys starting to train get injured and they aren't sure whether to apply ice or heat. How do you know when to use each?**

Okay, first of all I will explain the conventional wisdom that has been taught as gospel for decades. "Ice for the first two days, then heat." I will then complicate things by telling you that the latest advances in medical science have cast doubt on the some of these things.

**BEWARE THAT PAIN CAN BE A GOOD THING, AND IF WE USE ICE AND THEN EXERCISE, WE MIGHT JUST BE INJURING OURSELVES MORE.**

We get a lot of acute traumatic injuries in kickboxing training and fighting. There is a lot of bleeding initially. Good examples of these injuries are coked thighs, bruised shins, broken noses, bruised knuckles and swollen elbows (olecranon bursitis). The bleeding causes swelling, which causes pain. There is also a lot of inflammation, which is the activity of white blood cells and platelets in the injured area. We can reduce the pain and swelling and slow the rate of bleeding by putting ice on the injured area. We know that reducing the swelling and bleeding speeds up the resolution of the injury. In fact, today I saw a pro kickboxer who has been in a lot of pain because he was kicked repeatedly in his left thigh by a 'young gun' while sparring a couple of days ago. Not only was the thigh bruised, but the knee was painful because the blood and fluid had 'gone south'. I was able to give him a lot of relief by draining about 15 ml of bloody fluid from his knee joint.

Ice works by constricting the blood vessels (vasoconstriction). This slows down the rate of bleeding. There is immediate pain relief. This is good as it allows time to get to other necessary treatment, such as rest, compression and immobilisation. Of these, I think the most important thing is a good elastic compression bandage.

Heat has a role after a couple of days when all the bleeding has stopped. It can help relieve pain that is due to muscle spasm by helping to relax the muscles. Heat can also increase circulation and therefore oxygen supply to the injured area.

Beware that pain can be a good thing and if we use ice and then exercise, we might just be injuring ourselves more. The other problem is that ice may just delay the bleeding and inflammatory process. When the ice wears off, the blood flow returns to the damaged region with a vengeance.

**What are the most common training injuries you see and how do you treat them?**

The most common training injuries that I see are anterior knee pain (chondromalacia patellae), shin splints and ankle sprains.

The first two are overuse injuries and the basis of treatment is prevention, specifically avoidance of high-impact activities such as running and skipping. It is essential to modify exercise and change to low-impact aerobic activity such as working rounds on the bags, bike and cross training and exercise in water, especially shadow sparring in water. I have found several layers of elastic Tubigrip really good when I had shin splints and wanted to keep







training. An anti-inflammatory medication such as Anaprox relieves the pain rapidly. Glucosamine sulphate is good for the long-term treatment of chondromalacia.

With serious ankle injuries, I like to immobilise in a CAM walker, which is like a ski boot. This stops further tearing of the ligament and prevents you ending up with a chronically loose ligament, which would lead to recurrent injuries. I also think that balance exercises are very important in the rehab of ankle injuries after you come out of the boot. For martial artists, I like to use balance exercises such as standing on the injured leg and keeping the guard up to lift the centre of balance while doing slow, repetitive roundhouse or side kicks with the good leg. When this gets too easy, you make it harder by standing on a jigsaw mat or cushion.

### What causes cramping and muscle spasms?

There are several factors that cause cramps. When I was a football club doctor,


we did an experiment which involved taking blood from players, who were cramping on the field, while they were still cramping. We found in every case the player was severely dehydrated. I believe that drinking lots of water is the key to preventing cramps. Magnesium deficiency may also contribute to cramps.

Cramps often occur in a muscle that is 'tight' because of pain or discomfort. This can be due to a previous injury that has not yet healed properly. This is often the case with calf muscle strains. The pain or tightness can be due to referred pain, such as sciatica, which is pain that runs down into the hamstring from a pinched nerve in the back.

### Is there anything you can do to help sore ribs? What is the best way to treat them?

I often have fighters coming in with chest soreness. They often come in a few days after the injury. It is really common that they can't remember exactly when the blow landed. In most cases the cause of the pain

is a broken rib. The fighter is often surprised to hear that they have a fracture and they were hoping that it was a muscle strain.

The classic feature of a rib fracture rather than a muscle strain are that a rib fracture often does not hurt initially and the pain peaks at about two-to-three days later. The pain is often worst at night when rolling over in bed. Running is very painful. The pain reduces dramatically at about 17 days post injury. X-rays often do not show rib fractures, so I usually do not order them. The key to treatment is often to help with a training program that allows the fighter to stay fit while the rib is healing and to plan when they can get back to sparring and competition. There is no specific treatment for rib fractures. Taping does not work. The rib is nearly as good as new after three months. Occasionally for big fights, I inject local anesthetic around the rib, but this is not without risks. 



### DR PETER LEWIS

Dr Lewis is internationally recognised as a medical authority in the martial arts field. He has also been studying and teaching martial arts for almost 40 years.

Dr Lewis is best known as a ringside physician. He is often seen on televised shows in many countries. He has worked in 28 cities internationally, 22 of these on world title-standard events. He has performed every ringside role, including doctor, referee, judge, rules co ordinator, timekeeper, commentator, ringside announcer, matchmaker, trainer, cornerman, cutsman and has competed in karate, taekwondo and kung fu. He has had the pleasure and honour of looking after some of the most important fights and fighters in history.

Dr Lewis is also well known as an international lecturer and writer on martial arts medicine. He has consulted at ReCreation Medical Centre for almost 30 years.

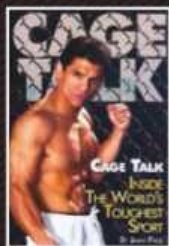
He also has a clinic at Malvern Martial Arts, which is especially for martial artists. Dr Lewis works with a team including a nurse, physio, chiro, podiatrist, psychologist, exercise physiologist, dietitian and masseurs who all have extensive experience in martial arts.

Contact [info@malvernhealthandfitness.com.au](mailto:info@malvernhealthandfitness.com.au)





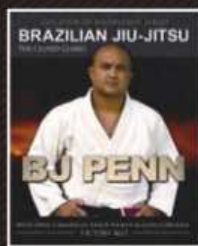
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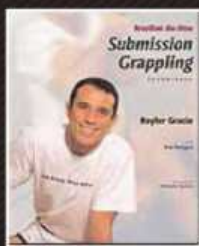
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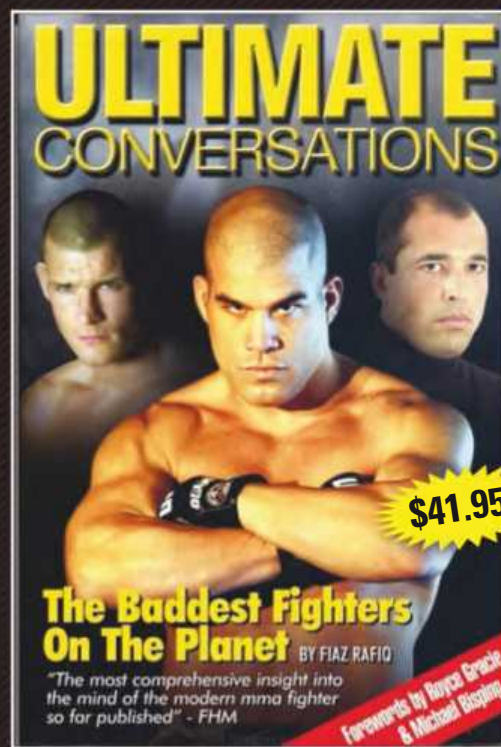
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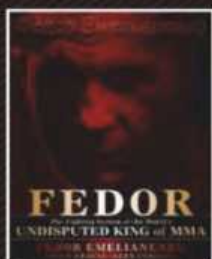
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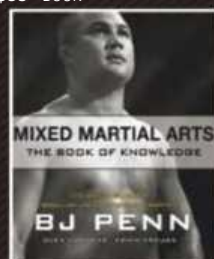
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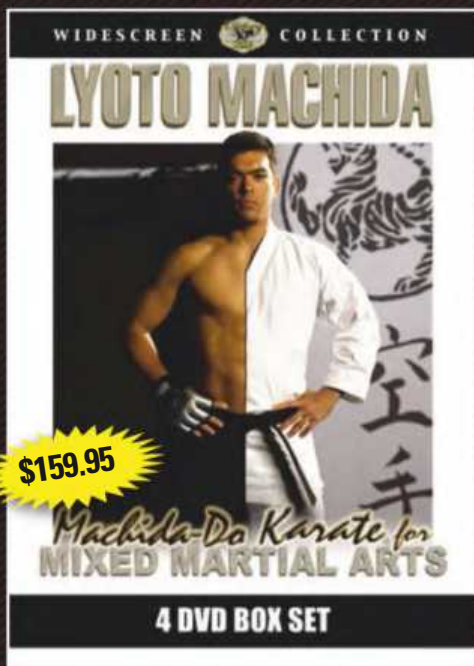


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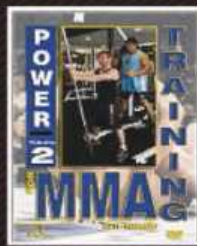
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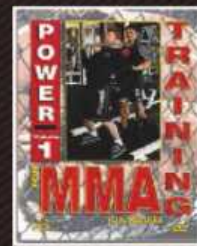
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## DANIEL CORMIER

### THE CHAMP

UFC Champion Daniel Cormier is the most pedigreed international wrestler in the Zuffa stable. The former two-time Olympic Freestyle Team member brings an explosive style to the cage, as evident in his fight against Josh Barnett in which Cormier took down the former Pancrase champion at will. In this demonstration, Cormier — with the help of Bellator bantamweight Shawn Bunch—demonstrates the hi-crotch lift he used to dump Barnett to the canvas.



## TECHNIQUE

### Get Explosive



1) Cormier and Bunch begin in orthodox stances.



2) Cormier throws a right hook to close the distance (you can also throw a 1-2 combo). Bunch blocks the hook, but he leaves his left side open for a takedown attack.



3) Cormier follows the hook with an outside-step hi-crotch by changing levels and placing his head beneath Bunch's armpit, with his hands briefly locked in the crotch.



4) Cormier adjusts his right arm so that it is elbow deep around Bunch's upper thigh and buttocks while keeping his head up and bending slightly at the knees.



5) Cormier places his right hand over his left wrist to secure the leg and keep shoulder pressure on Bunch's thigh.



6) Cormier DOES NOT simply lift Bunch with his arms. He loads his hips below Bunch's in a short, quick squat. His head remains high (your opponent may attempt to face you, but the lock and lift remain the same).



7) Cormier pops his hips into Bunch's and loads him to his shoulder, like taking a bag of concrete and transitioning it to your shoulder for carrying.



8) Once Bunch's hips are higher than his own, Cormier takes his shoulder away and dumps him to the mat with his right arm still elbow deep around Bunch's upper thigh.



9) Now, Cormier has a few options. In his fight against Barnett, Cormier finished the move by following to side control. He could have also taken north-south position or attempted to throw punches from the standing position.





## ROBERT DRYSDALE

ADCC

2007 ADCC World Champion and undefeated professional mixed martial artist Robert Drysdale shows readers two slick chokes from side control.

There are a lot of benefits to being in side control. You can knee the body, drop elbows to the face, work toward full mount and hunt submissions. If you are hunting submission, here are two of my favourite chokes that will leave your opponent tapping in no time.



### TECHNIQUE

## North-South/Head-and-Arm Combo Choke



1) I begin by holding my opponent in side control.



2) With my left arm, I wrap my opponent's neck while making sure that I get my left hip on his triceps. It's very important that his arm is blocked on my hip and that he's unable to pull it out.



3) I may need to use my right hand to adjust my opponent's arm across his neck. My objective is to get his arm all the way up my lat and across his face. This position is a combination between a north-south choke and a head-and-arm choke. My body weight should do the trick to finish my opponent, but you can connect your hands to add pressure. It's important to keep your head low and all of your weight on your opponent. Army crawl backward to force the tap.

## TECHNIQUE Modified D'Arce Choke



1) I begin by holding my opponent in side control.



2) With my left arm, I wrap my opponent's neck while making sure that I get my left hip on his triceps. It's very important that his arm is blocked on my hip and that he's unable to pull it out.



3) A common reaction from my opponent is for him to try to roll to his knees. Since he can't roll toward me (because his arm is trapped on my hip), he may try to roll away from me. I anticipate this, and I keep the wrap around his neck to set up my trap.



4) I want him to keep rolling to his knees, and I make sure that I get my forearm under his neck while he is still on his side. I get my left arm deep enough to set up my D'Arce choke.



5) I immediately sit on my left hip to prevent my opponent from getting to his knees.



6) I lock my left wrist into the crook of my right elbow. The blade of my left forearm must be around his neck — not too deep or too shallow. I roll my left wrist into his neck while I push his head in with my stomach, forcing him to tap.





## RASHAD EVANS

### BLACKZILIAN

Rashad Evans averages 3.7 takedowns per 15 minutes in the cage, with a takedown accuracy level above 50 per cent. The former Michigan State wrestler knows how to get the fight to the mat — a good strategy against Muay Thai world champion and fellow Blackzilian Tyrone Spong. In this demonstration, Rashad shows readers how to set up and finish his knee-pick takedown.



### TECHNIQUE

**Pick your opponent apart with a jab to knee-pick combo.**



1) Rashad and Tyrone square off in orthodox stances. Remember to keep your chin tucked and your right hand up to protect your face.



2) Rashad throws his left jab and returns to his starting position.



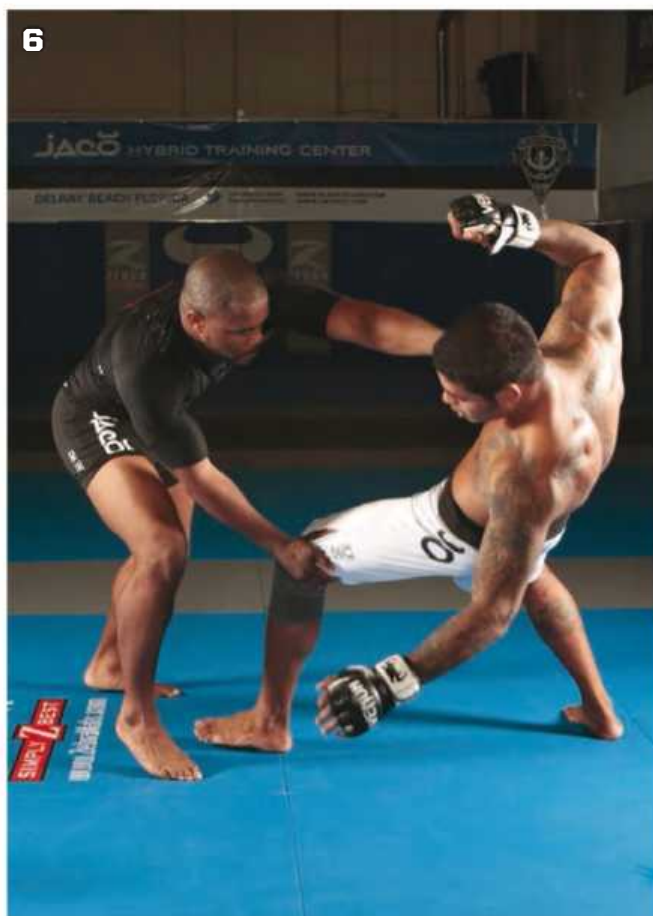
3) Rashad can continue to feint the left jab to get a sense of Tyrone's reactions.



4) Rashad throws his left jab again.



5) This time, Rashad changes levels by bending at his knees. He uses his left jab to push Tyrone's shoulder while picking Tyrone's knee with his right hand.



6) Rashad continues to drive through Tyrone, pushing with his left hand and pulling with his right.



7) Rashad secures the takedown by blocking Tyrone at the knees to prevent an up-kick. Rashad can choose to throw combos from his feet or take the fight to the mat. [i](#)





# SHORT-CIRCUIT YOUR WORKOUT

A properly designed exercise circuit can recreate many of the physical demands of an actual fight, and it's an excellent opportunity to burn fat and build muscle.

BY MARTIN ROONEY// PHOTOS BY PAUL THATCHER

This circuit mimics the specific time demands of an MMA fight. There are five exercises that should be performed for one minute each, with a 10-second transition from one exercise to the next. The goal is to perform at your maximum intensity for each exercise. After the circuit is complete, rest for one minute (or more, depending on your fitness level) and repeat twice.

## SLEDGEHAMMER SWINGS

Begin by facing a large tyre while holding the hammer. Bring the hammer back and over one side of the body and hit the tyre as hard as possible. Return the hammer to the opposite side of your body and repeat for one minute.



### TOP FORM

If you are going to incorporate a circuit into your training, it's important to utilise proper form during each exercise. If your form begins to suffer from increased fatigue, slow down. Don't sacrifice technique for intensity.

## ROPE SWING

Anchor a heavy-duty rope around a sturdy object and hold one end in each hand. Bend slightly at the knees as you swing each arm up and down in an alternating motion for one minute.





### KETTLEBELL SWING

Begin by standing while holding a kettlebell with both hands. Swing the bell between your legs as you squat down. Extend at your knees and hips, and swing the bell above your head. Repeat for one minute.



### MEDICINE BALL SLAMS

Begin by standing while holding a medicine ball with both hands overhead. Slam the ball to the ground as hard as possible while bending slightly at the knees. Recover the ball and repeat for one minute.



### TYRE TOE TOUCHES

Begin by standing with one foot on a large tyre and the other foot on the ground. Hop in the air and switch the position of your feet as fast as possible for one minute.

### WARRIOR CARDIO

If you are interested in using more circuits in your training, check out Martin Rooney's new book *Warrior Cardio*. The 416-page, full-colour training manual is available for sale online and in book stores.








# LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY

Follow these six guidelines to keep training injuries at bay.

BY JOEL JAMIESON  
// PHOTOS BY PAUL THATCHER





**O**ver the past year, the UFC has faced an increasing number of cancelled fights due to injury. For the first time in its history, injuries forced the UFC to cancel an entire show (UFC 151), and the problem doesn't seem to be getting any better.

Not only do cancellations rob fans of seeing some major fights, they can be disastrous for the fighters themselves. Fighters miss out on paychecks that many of them need to pay their bills. They also have to go through the painful and time-consuming process of rehabbing their injuries before they can step back into the cage. Many fighters choose to fight through the injuries due to pride, or the fact that they can't afford to miss a fight. Whatever their reason may be, the end result is usually a loss.

Even after an injury has fully healed, it can still haunt a fighter for the rest of his or her career, flaring up on random occasions and costing them valuable training time. Even worse, once the chain of injuries begins, it's often only a matter of time before one injury leads to another. A fighter can go from having one nagging injury to several, which may require a larger recovery period and longer downtime.

While it's easy to chalk up these injuries to the unavoidable, brutal nature of the sport, the truth is that a lot of the injuries can be prevented with the right approach to training. There are no doubts that injuries can and do happen in every sport, but the difference in having to withdraw from a fight and simply missing a day or two of training can be huge.

Injuries can be avoided by gaining adequate training knowledge and by listening to your body as opposed to fighting against it. To be successful in combat sports, fighters have to be well-rounded athletes with a diverse skill set, which means they can't afford to spend time dealing with one injury after another.

To avoid injuries and stay in the gym, training, follow these six simple keys.

## **#1 CHOOSE THE RIGHT TRAINING PARTNERS**

In a gruelling sport like MMA, where most combat athletes train five to six days a week for hours on end, having the right training partners can make all the difference in the world. Good training partners can help

you hone your skills, prepare you for an upcoming fight, and help you become a more complete fighter, whereas the wrong ones can just as easily hurt your career and leave you injured.

Without question, the vast majority of injuries in MMA occur during training. Far too often, contact injuries happen during high-intensity drills or sparring because of poor technique and/or a lack of control. Drilling or sparring with a partner who has bad technique or lacks control can be a recipe for disaster.

Every gym has at least one guy who always throws everything harder than necessary and treats every training session like it's a fight for the belt. If you value your health and want a long career in the sport, these are the training partners who should generally be avoided. Instead, look for the athletes who are focused on getting better, have good control and technique, and understand that you get better by training smart, not just by throwing every punch, kick and knee as hard as you can.

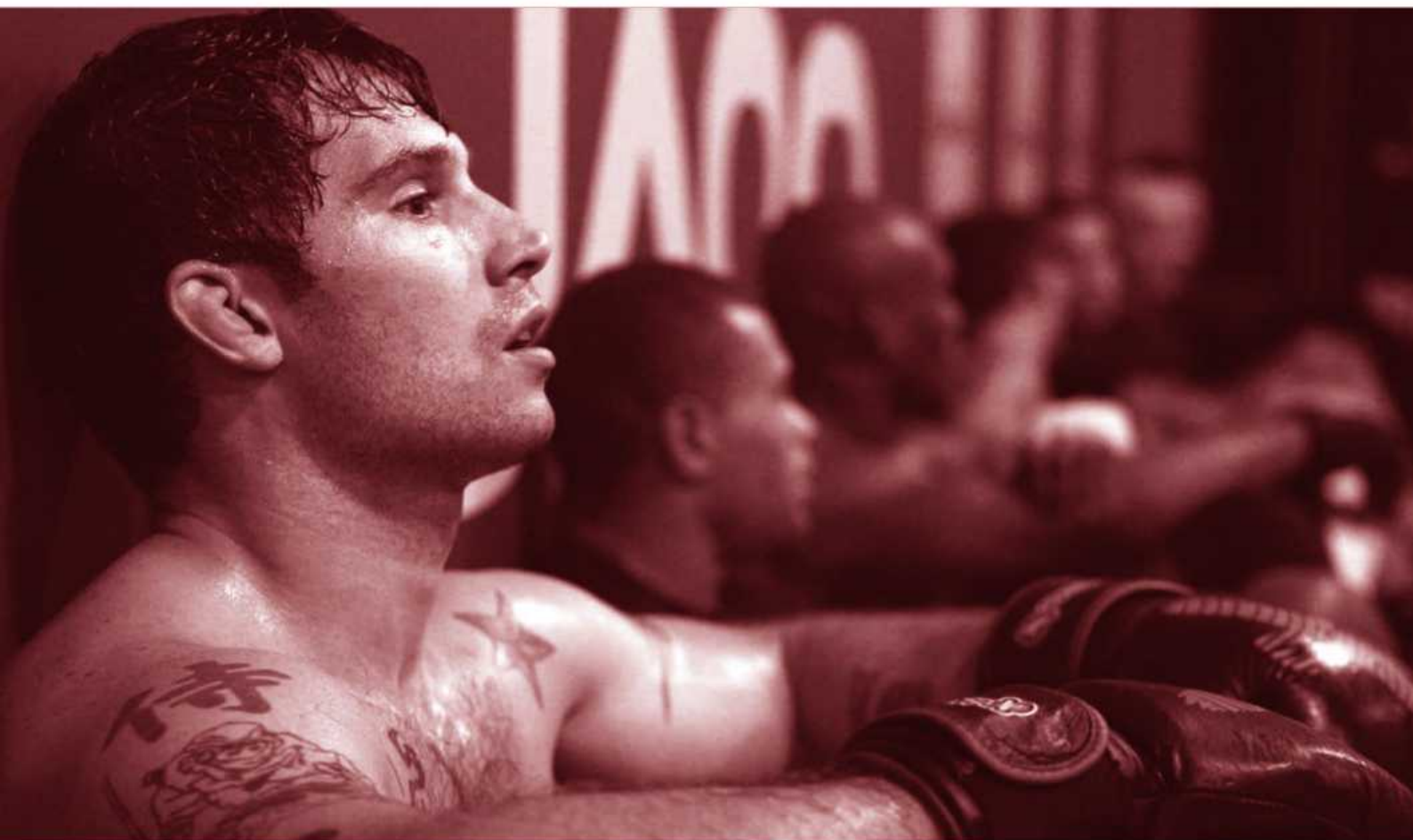
## **#2 IMPROVE YOUR CONDITIONING**

Many fighters tend to only consider the importance of conditioning when getting ready for a fight, but conditioning is also an important component of injury prevention. When you consider how many more injuries occur when you're fatigued than when you're fresh, it's apparent why being in good shape matters.

Not only does having a high level of conditioning mean that you can train more due to faster recovery times, but it will also help you avoid the injuries that often accompany fatigue. You don't need to be in peak fight shape year-round, but it pays to maintain a solid level of conditioning even if you don't have a fight on the books.

When working to improve conditioning without a scheduled fight, choose general conditioning exercises that are low impact to help you stay injury free. Exercises like riding the bike, swimming, jumping rope and rowing are all great ways to get in some extra conditioning work without putting too much additional stress on your body. When you start getting ready for a fight, you can make the switch to more fight-specific conditioning exercises and increase the amount of contact. Outside of that, keep your conditioning general and low impact to avoid unnecessary setbacks.





### #3 MONITOR YOUR TRAINING

If there's one simple thing that you can do that will make a huge difference in keeping healthy and injury free, it's monitoring your training. This can be as simple as wearing a heart rate monitor to see how your training heart rates compare to normal, or as sophisticated as using heart rate variability (HRV) technology to monitor your fatigue and fitness levels over time.

At the very minimum, it's important to keep a training log to track your training volume and keep notes on your performance, fitness and nutrition. This allows you to more clearly see the warning signs of overtraining and that your fitness and skill levels are improving. Tracking things such as morning resting heart rate, heart rate recovery, strength levels in various exercises, and body weight can provide extremely valuable information that you can use to fine-tune your training to get more out of it.

If you're getting ready for a fight, monitoring your training is also important because it allows you to compare progress

**“If you don't take in enough calories to consistently restock your muscles' stored glycogen after workouts, you can quickly become fatigued and find yourself in an overtrained state where the chances of injury increase.”**

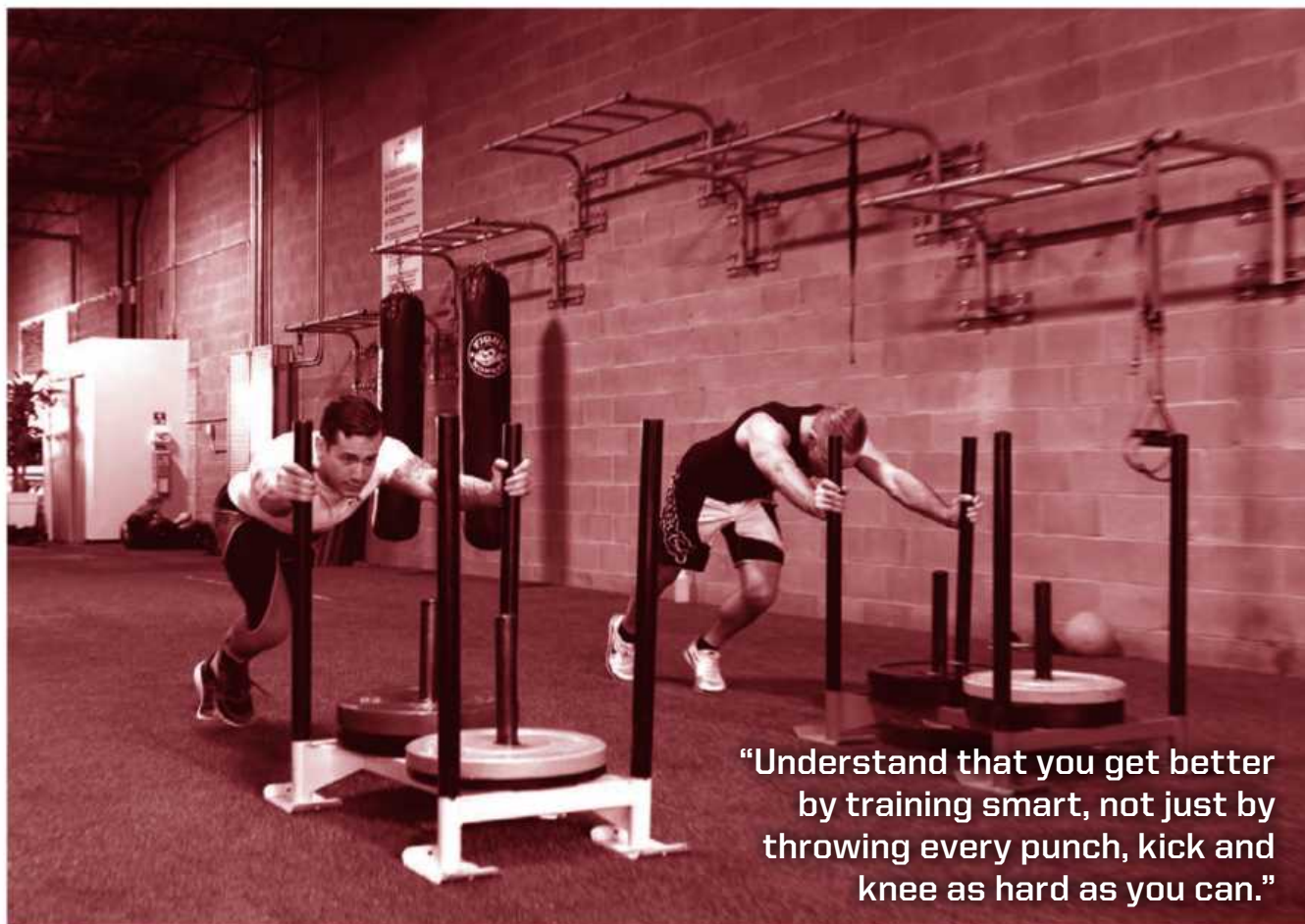
from one fight camp to the next and helps you make sure you're on track. Depending on your weight class, you'll also want to keep close track of your weight throughout camp and fight week so that over time you can improve your weight-cutting strategy and get it completely dialled in. Without any form of monitoring, it's too easy to repeat the same mistakes over and over again and end up overtrained and injured.

### #4 MINIMISE STRESS

Making sure to minimise stress outside the gym may be one of the least obvious ways to avoid injuries in the gym, but without question, it's also one of the most important. Whether it's the physical stress of training or the mental stress of life, both have an impact on the body.

Stress outside of the gym, either from work, family, or finances, can compound with the stress of training and set you up for injury because it changes how your body functions.

Imagine if you lived next to an annoying neighbor who blasted loud music at all hours of the day. Sooner or later, you'd make sure all your windows were closed and you may even consider building a fence to block the noise out. Your body does something very similar when faced with too much stress — it goes into a protective mode to avoid even more stress. This is problematic because it becomes less responsive to the demands of training — the muscles can't produce as much force, hormone levels aren't where they should be, and the nervous system doesn't function as well.



**“Understand that you get better by training smart, not just by throwing every punch, kick and knee as hard as you can.”**

These changes can leave you much more vulnerable to injury because the body is unable to respond in the way it should to the demands of training. The next thing you know, you're left with a serious muscle injury that will keep you out of the gym. The bottom line is that everything you do outside of the gym can have a serious impact on your chances of injury inside the gym, so it's important to minimise stress as much as possible and take some extra time to relax.

## **#5 EAT THE RIGHT FOODS**

Most people understand that nutrition is important, but when it comes to injuries, it's one of the most overlooked areas, even though it can have a huge impact on your training and injury prevention. In sports that require high-volume training, such as MMA, jiu-jitsu, wrestling and kickboxing, nutrition is key, not only because it is vital that your body gets all the nutrients it needs to recover, but also because chronically depleted glycogen levels are likely one of the triggers that send the body into an overtrained state.

If you don't take in enough calories to consistently restock your muscles' stored glycogen after workouts, you can quickly become fatigued and find yourself in an overtrained state where the chances of injury increase. If you're training twice a day, this takes on even more importance, as your performance in the second workout of the day depends on your ability to refuel and replenish glycogen stores.


For most combat athletes, a well-balanced diet that provides enough total calories, grams of proteins, carbohydrates and essential fats is the best way to go. If any of these macronutrients are lacking, recovery slows down, fatigue increases, and muscles and joints become more susceptible to injury.

## **#6 TRAIN HIGH/LOW**

Although the High/Low training system was originally developed for sprinters by the late Charlie Francis, it's equally applicable and effective for combat sports training. At the heart of the High/Low training system is the principle that the best results come from training either at

the highest intensities or at the lowest ones, while the middle ground should be avoided.

Training days are thus separated into high or low days, with generally no more than three high days per week and at least one low day separating each of them. The high training days are when you'll want to do high-intensity drills and sparring, and the low days are when you can work on improving your technique and skill development.

Taking this simple approach is an effective injury prevention strategy because it ensures that your body is ready to push the limit on the hardest training days, reducing the likelihood of injury. Conventional training strategies that consist of too many days of maximum effort often lead to fatigue across the training week because there is not enough time to recover. Because you'll get more out of your hard training days and have a chance to work on skills and technique on the low days, the High/Low training system is extremely effective for avoiding injuries and for becoming a better fighter in general. 

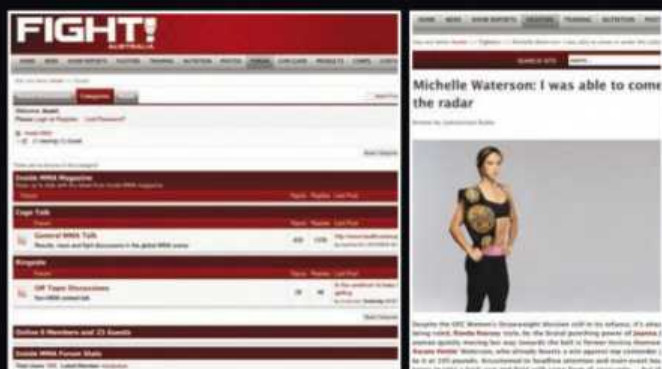


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